



Ethnic Communities Council of Queensland

7 April 2011

Committee Secretary
Joint Standing Committee on Migration
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Australia

Dear Ms/Sir

Submission to Inquiry into Multiculturalism in Australia

The Ethnic Communities Council of Queensland (ECCQ) was established in 1976 to represent the interests of the many people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (CALD) who are part of the broad social community of Queensland, and to promote multiculturalism. It is a non-profit, member-based state-wide peak body.

ECCQ contributes to national policy and debate on all matters concerning ethnic communities and multiculturalism through its affiliation with the Canberra-based Federation of Ethnic Communities Councils of Australia (FECCA).

ECCQ's mission is to ensure "that all people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds have equal access to services and can fully participate in all aspects of a cohesive and harmonious Queensland".

ECCQ's membership includes such older and established community associations, new and emerging communities and community associations, service delivery and settlement

ECCQ's interests

The scope of ECCQ's interests are:

1. Multiculturalism, social inclusion and globalisation

The role of multiculturalism in the federal government's social inclusion agenda

1.1 A multicultural policy in Queensland

ECCQ continues to provide input to the review of multicultural policy in Queensland. Our recent submission to this review stated the following:

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It is now many years since specific multicultural policies began to be adopted, and the term 'multiculturalism' is now in widespread use. However, ECCQ believes that there is a lack of understanding amongst some sections of the community as to what multiculturalism means and the many ways it is beneficial to our society.

Updating Queensland's multicultural policy presents an ideal opportunity to more precisely define what multiculturalism means and what values it embodies, and to strongly promote the many positives it provides.

Multiculturalism is part and parcel of who we are as Queenslanders. It should not be seen as a policy which applies only to a certain section of the community, but rather as a description of the society we are all a part of and a set of values which maximises cohesiveness, fairness and inclusiveness.

The principles and values which multiculturalism embodies include:

- a recognition of the right for all residents to celebrate and practice their culture, languages and religion
- assisting all residents to have equal access to services and equal opportunity to participate in economic, social, cultural and political life
- a commitment to our system of democracy and institutions
- acknowledging and recognising our pluralist society, with respect for individual freedom combined with our shared responsibility to each other and our community
- recognition that a comprehensive multicultural policy provides a framework for creating significant extra opportunities in a world which is becoming ever more interconnected.
- promoting multiculturalism is not just about an advertising or public relations campaign. It is promoted through leadership which looks to acknowledge at every opportunity the benefits of our multicultural society and the importance of the values of multiculturalism, and have these reflected in all government policies and programs.

1.2 A mandate for multiculturalism

The Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA) quotes a recent report authored by Professor Andrew Markus and published by the Scanlon Foundation indicating a majority of Australians support cultural diversity and that 'accepting immigrants from many different countries makes Australia stronger' (Markus in FECCA 2010). This is important because it establishes Australia as a context where multiculturalism is valued and where governments have a mandate to embed policies, programs and budget commitments that strengthen multiculturalism in Australia. An important starting point is a definition of multiculturalism that expresses the nature of Australia as inherently a place of many cultures, which is a strength and that all people regardless of culture should have access to resources and opportunities that improve wellbeing and result in social, economic and political inclusion.

1.3 Multiculturalism and social inclusion

It is positive to see the development of a social inclusion agenda at the federal level. Policy leadership combined with state and local level implementation of programs and strategies will create the best context for meaningful outcomes.

The link between social inclusion and multiculturalism in part rests with concerns that some cultural groups are falling behind and experience serious impacts of wellbeing, social, economic and political participation linked to their experiences as migrants. It is strongly suggested that the social inclusion agenda is broadened to also focus on specific measures aimed at making sure all people from all cultures have the same access to opportunities as other Australians. In particular new and emerging communities and people who have come to Australia under humanitarian programs may face significant disadvantage as they strive to become settled in Australia and participate fully through accessing appropriate housing, language skills, education, training, employment and other social connections. These aspects of settlement are all essential to preventing exclusion and therefore warrant focussed effort within the federal government's social inclusion agenda.

ECCQ conducted a housing study in 2009 involving 107 questionnaires and ten in-depth case studies with people from new and emerging communities. While the focus was housing, this study raised many important issues that highlight issues impacting on new migrants experiences of exclusion:

- Participants were more likely than the general population to be reliant on a government pension or benefit. Only 16% of the sample was in full-time work compared to 61.6% of the broader population in Queensland.
- The average number of children per household was 3.7 compared to 1.9 for Queensland which impacted on finding suitable, affordable and sustainable housing
- 75% of the sample rented from the private sector. Overall, the literature review undertaken for this project found that these communities are less likely to be purchasing or own their own home and are heavily reliant on the private rental market which is consistent with the questionnaire findings.
- The housing search process proved a challenge for many of the participating households with the average number of moves (taking into account those households that had moved once or never) was 2.2 times in 4.5 years compared to once in seven to ten years for home owners. The average number of moves for participants resident in Australia for less than five years was 1.8 times with an average length of residency in Australia at 2.8 years.
- 86 out of 107 respondents (80%) reported difficulties in finding a place to live. Of those, 82% experienced difficulties with the cost of housing, 51% with the location, 41% with transport. Other issues included:
 - Having references
 - Understanding rights and responsibilities
 - The poor condition of housing
 - The application being declined because of the size of the family
 - Experiencing racism and discrimination.
- When asked what type of help they actually required, 79 out of 107 respondents said finding a place to rent. 45 would have liked transport assistance, 42 would have liked help approaching real estate agents and 41 would have liked help with the entry condition report. 32 respondents would have like help with nominating referees and others wanted help with forms and signing a tenancy agreement.
- 53% of the sample indicated a need for help with English. 54% indicated they would have needed help through an interpreter and also preferred being helped by someone from their own community.

The analysis of the case studies highlighted the following themes:

- Tenancy law issues – most households in the case studies experienced some issues relating to tenancy law.
- The housing search – some households faced significant hardship in the housing search process and needed considerable assistance over a long period of time to secure and then sustain a housing outcome.
- Language, interpreting and translation – interpreting and translation services were important in several of the case studies and specific ideas like the mandatory involvement of an interpreter at the signing of a lease were suggested.
- Engaging with systems – some households require assistance to engage with other larger systems such as family support, health, Centrelink, child support and child safety.
- Service delivery in some instances required significant amounts of time with implications for funding agreements and funding levels.
- Complexity – while complexity is not an inherent characteristic of people's circumstances, there was evidence of how various structural issues and barriers added complexity to situations with implications for service delivery. The case studies revealed that people's circumstances could encompass various issues, across multiple service systems and required active referral techniques, assertive outreach and high level assessment skills.

- The importance of social support and its impacts on the housing search process and housing outcomes was identified. There were some examples where a lack of social support had definite impacts on housing outcomes. Very isolated households involved in the case studies faced particular issues.
- The impact of spatial segregation and also confinement to locations with high levels of spatial disadvantage. This is usually related to the search for affordable housing and can have other impacts such as poorer access to transport, services and employment.

While this example is focussed on housing it highlights other issues such as low income, poverty, difficulties accessing various systems and lack of established helping networks. This study also highlighted the risk for newly arrived migrants of being forced to live in areas of relative spatial disadvantage as they search for housing they can afford.

The question of housing for new and emerging communities and refugees in general is central to the settlement process. Beer and Morphet highlight that “for disadvantaged immigrants – particularly those arriving under the Humanitarian program – providing early help, including housing assistance, will result in more successful settlement” (2002:3). This is in the context that “immigration, voluntary or involuntary, is a transition that often entails the severing of community ties, the loss of social networks and familiar bonds – it can mean the loss of taken for granted sources and systems of meaning ...” (Sonn, 2002:2).

The importance of housing to the settlement process is confirmed in an analysis of the Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Australia which highlighted that “the speed and ease with which migrants are able to find decent accommodation is an important dimension of the settlement experience” (Richardson et al, 2002:27). Similarly a recent report published by Anglicare in Sydney found:

- Reports from settlement support workers indicating that most clients have housing problems
- Family size has an impact on whether there is housing available
- Many families had moved frequently after arrival with a trend of moving every 6-12 months
- “Every client that we see has a housing problem!....It can take two months to find a place...they're getting evicted for not being able to pay the rent and if they complain too much about things being broken or damaged, they find themselves evicted”.

Evans and Gavarotto, 2010.

ECCQ is supportive of the current priorities identified within the social inclusion agenda. ECCQ also recommends that these priorities are expanded to include cultural and linguistic diversity (CALD). Social inclusion strategies could then include:

- Practical approaches to actively addressing racism
- Homelessness and housing policies that reflect a greater focus on addressing housing issues and homelessness among new and emerging communities and particularly refugees
- Employment strategies that link Australia’s workforce requirements with the needs of new and emerging communities including humanitarian entrants for meaningful employment opportunities. These strategies could include targets for reducing unemployment among certain CALD communities.
- Nationally driven engagement strategies involving private sector employers and the real estate industry with the aim of improving employment and housing outcomes.
- Health inclusion strategies including measurable targets for addressing the health of particularly disadvantaged groups such as Pacific Islanders
- Specific strategies that overcome the exclusion of Pacific Islanders from entitlements, services and assistance. This should include improved opportunities for Pacific Islanders to become permanent residents so they are entitled to income support, training, education and employment assistance.

1.4 The risk of spatial segregation

ECCQ in a literature review exploring housing issues and solutions for new and emerging communities cited the following

There is “evidence of racialised inequalities in housing in England” spanning more than 40 years (Reeve and Robinson, 2007:547). Non-white British households are “far more likely than white British households to be living in poor quality and overcrowded accommodation and to be spatially concentrated in deprived neighbourhoods” (Ratcliffe, 2002 in Reeve and Robinson 2007:547). “Access to particular tenures remains restricted for certain minority ethnic groups and homelessness is a far more common experience” (Reeve and Robinson, 2007:547).

ECCQ also cited a study by Harte et al into secondary migration patterns among African migrants in South East Queensland and found:

Focus groups and interviews with 57 members of various African communities (were used) to understand more about the migration patterns of people who have settled in South East Queensland. Topics included where people move and why and the factors impacting upon decisions to move. This project utilised the assistance of community leaders and bilingual community consultants (Harte et al, 2009:56). This research extended in part from a wider evidence base that “refugees have a very high rate of secondary migration in their resettlement country, moving on average three times in the first year of resettlement compared to the general Australian population average of once every seven years” (Harte, 2009:59). Harte et al found that almost two thirds of participants had moved between one and three times since settlement with 12% having moved more than five times. It was concluded that “the two most important drivers of secondary migration to emerge from focus groups and interviews (were) housing-related issues and access to social and ethnic networks” (Harte et al, 2009:60). In relation to housing, cost and the size of the dwelling were identified as important factors. The drive to live closer to social networks was highlighted by one participant in this study who said “when someone comes as a refugee they get more information from the community than service providers ... where to go shopping, which school to go to ...” (Harte, 2009:62 in ECCQ, 2009).

While moving to have better access to social support networks may contribute positively to settlement and wellbeing, moving into peri-urban, marginal and disadvantaged areas where lower cost housing is available can potentially compound disadvantage and exclusion because people are living in areas of concentrated relative disadvantage. As the Federal Social Inclusion Agenda includes a focus on spatial disadvantage, it is important to understand that strategies aimed at overcoming this type of disadvantage will potentially benefit migrant groups forced into lower cost housing in areas where infrastructure, transport and employment opportunities are limited. To understand the impacts of spatial poverty on migrants, it is essential to have data that demonstrates the extent to which newly arrived migrants and new and emerging communities are congregating in areas measured as having higher levels of relative socio-economic disadvantage.

1.5 Multiple experiences of disadvantage

ECCQ supports the Federal Social Inclusion Agenda and priority issues. Some of the existing priority issues impact on migrant communities and as such, when combined with language and other aspects, can result in disadvantage being compounded. The Social Inclusion Agenda needs to recognise the impacts of multiple and compounding experiences of exclusion.

To better understand the impacts of social, cultural, economic and political exclusion, ECCQ has strongly encouraged better data collection practices across government and the community sector to ensure:

- Access by CALD communities to all available services is measured over time
- There is capacity to measure services provided and outcomes achieved in relation to CALD individuals and households.

In addition to improved data collection and analysis, it is also important that available national and state level data is analysed in relation to the following:

- Common indicators of disadvantage correlated with CALD status
- Data on spatial disadvantage is analysed in relation to concentrations of CALD communities in particular places.

At a national and state level it is essential to establish a social baseline analysis to enable measurement over time of the extent that disadvantaged CALD communities are either making progress or being left behind. This baseline should indicate the relative wellbeing of CALD communities (with a focus on new and emerging communities and refugee communities) compared to wider Australia. Measures could include:

- Income
- Wealth
- Labour force participation rates
- Unemployment
- Location including identification of settlement patterns and the extent that some CALD communities are impacted by patterns of spatial disadvantage
- Health outcomes including premature deaths, death by cause and life expectancy
- Community participation and connectedness measured through wellbeing studies, participation in volunteering, reported sense of belonging to a neighbourhood, reported opportunities to seek help from a wider social network etc.
- Rates of disability and mental illness
- Education attainment rates
- English proficiency levels
- Rates of homelessness
- Housing stress
- Housing tenure.
- Car ownership
- Access to internet and computer technology at home

1.6 Cultural competence and the service system

Once practical component that assists government and non-government agencies in providing inclusive services (specialised and mainstream), is the level of cultural competency among staff, managers and at the governance level of organisations. ECCQ has developed a range of training products to help the human services sector improve cultural competency, and encourages an embedded approach that includes training, management practices, governance and integrated policies and procedures to ensure practices that are effective in achieving positive outcomes for CALD individuals and households.

ECCQ researched a model in the United Kingdom where a group of housing agencies integrated their service delivery to achieve improved outcomes for refugees and migrants. This model included reviewing a range of studies highlighting the following important features to service delivery and strategies to address housing and social exclusion issues impacting refugees:

This review of studies identified a range of policy responses including:

- The need to advance solutions through multi-agency forums
- The need for action plans that address specific needs in specific locations
- Monitoring of the location of migrants as a basis for planning and service delivery
- The need for “a network of advisors with specialist training; the people best placed to receive training and develop advice resources are migrants themselves” (HACT, 2009a:4).
- The need to reform and adapt existing advice services including through language skills
- The need for area based ‘..... enablers’
- More intervention in the private rental market
- Better welcome information (including on rights and responsibilities) and the translation of key documents
- Measures to address racism
- Community cohesion strategies and measures to reduce social isolation

These possible solutions potentially have wider application across different service systems and in particular recognise the broader context of inclusion as addressing racism, and measures that improve social connectedness and belonging.

1.7 Addressing racism

ECCQ advocates the development of a nation-wide end-racism plan which includes high level leadership and community development strategies that provide specific opportunities for localities and regions to address racism in practical ways. This level should be supported by ensuring capacity for communities and regions to develop and implement specific end-racism strategies that emerge from and respond to very local issues. This would allow projects to facilitate local strategic partnerships between businesses, schools, community services, sporting clubs and other types of infrastructure to address racism and build social cohesion.

School curricula could be strengthened to include a greater multicultural focus and to also address issues like racism and cultural harmony. More resources and support for teachers to support and facilitate cultural harmony within schools is an important opportunity to engage children and their families at the local level.

Stronger legislation in relation to discrimination and racism should also be considered as a basis for addressing the impacts for individuals and for social harmony overall. Legislation should offer a stronger tier of protection and recourse for people who are negatively impacted by discrimination and racism.

1.8 National leadership

The relevance of multiculturalism across all areas of Government and throughout Australia requires a nationally driven approach with sufficient leadership to completely embed a multicultural agenda. For this reason, ECCQ supports FECCA's suggestions that:

- The National Multicultural Agenda is located in the Office of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
- All government departments develop and implement multicultural action plans which include outcome measures and a commitment to evaluation
- That outcomes evaluation and monitoring is undertaken by the National Audit Office or the Productivity Commission
- Legislation is used to strengthen anti-discrimination provisions and provide greater protection from racism.

2. Settlement and participation

Innovative ideas for settlement programs for new migrants, including refugees, that support their full participation and integration into the broader Australian society

2.1 Peer leader models of service delivery and cultural diversity in the workforce

ECCQ has developed and implemented programs that engage new migrants, including refugees, through training and paid roles to deliver outreach and capacity building projects aimed at improving access to services and overcoming language and cultural barriers. The opportunity to integrate the specialist knowledge of migrants and refugees in a range of strategies with training and employment outcomes is significant.

ECCQ reviewed a range of international examples and initiatives and found that strategies that trained and employed peer leaders or community partners were used extensively across a number of service systems (CDM, 2009; Smith, 2008). This approach is based on the practical and positive impacts of having a human chain of people embedded within communities, skilled in outreach, information giving, networking and service provision. Given the entrenched barriers to employment for some newly arrived migrants, this strategy represents a significant opportunity to more effectively engage people and link them to services at the same time as there are opportunities for people to begin or further develop a career path into the human services industry.

ECCQ also operates extensive health programs and suggests models of service delivery that employ bilingual and multicultural health workers as a way of ensuring improved access to services by diverse cultural groups. This type of model could be considered for a range of different service areas.

2.2 Access to and effective use of interpreters

ECCQ supports continuous improvements in the availability and competence of interpreter services through a range of funded agencies (Federal government services and federally funded community services). Access to interpreters is an essential component in the settlement process as people navigate many systems and learn about many aspects of daily living.

To support improved access to interpreters ECCQ also suggests:

- Improved staff training in effective use of interpreters including the capability to assess the need for an interpreter
- Immediate, direct communication with all funded non-profit services promoting the availability of resources for interpreters and explaining the process for accessing these resources
- An investigation into the gaps and opportunities within the interpreting and translating industry in Australia in order to plan for future needs.
- The funding of a standardised interpreting and translating training program and to establish improved career pathways for interpreters and translators.

2.3 A national ESL framework

Persistent language barriers increase vulnerability to isolation and impact on longer term education and employment outcomes. ECCQ is aware that the Department of Education in Victoria has developed a range of innovations including local-specific strategies and flexibility for schools to provide additional support to families and students as required.

ECCQ considers it important to develop some national approaches that improve the level of access to ESL services in schools, particularly in isolated rural and regional areas where distances are significant and available teacher resources are limited.

Specific measures could include the funded capacity for:

- ESL program officers in each regional office
- Multicultural education aides to assist families and provide cultural support and expertise
- Training for teachers in cultural competency and ESL
- Enhanced ESL funding where there are high numbers of students that would benefit
- Contingency funding allowing schools flexibility if the population of students changes or other issues emerge
- Specific anti-racism strategies for schools
- Further development of ESL curriculums
- The replication of successful models such as Milperra Public School in Brisbane
- Measurement of participation in education by CALD communities (specifically new and emerging communities) including data on year 12 completion and school exclusions.

While the implementation of ESL services is a state responsibility, ECCQ considers there is a national role to set standards and benchmarks to ensure effective programs and adequate budgets. It is also essential that outcomes are measured and national benchmarks established. The role of federal government leadership and policy is important to this capacity at the state level. ECCQ is currently contributing to the Queensland ESL policy and is concerned about evidence showing that CALD students are falling behind other students as measured through the NAPLAN tests.

ECCQ also supports FECCA's recommendations in relation to the review of the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP). The recommendations for this review should be the focus of implementation as a basis for inclusion and participation and also because of the implications for English language skills for productivity (FECCA, 2010).

2.4 Increased support for temporary visa holders

Industry and business in regional Queensland has benefited greatly from the contribution of working migrants on temporary visas. However it remains extremely difficult for dependents of visa holders in regional areas to access employment support. Without access to employment, families remain socially isolated and financially burdened. Temporary residents who are able to successfully engage in employment and training contribute in more ways to the community overall. Better access to employment support and other services will directly impact on the productivity benefits to Australia. The cost of tertiary education can also exclude people because up-front costs are so high. ECCQ suggests:

- Increased support and assistance for temporary visa holders, to increase their chances of employment and training in Queensland. An assessment of wider needs for access to support services is also important to assess areas of hardship and respond with better access to assistance.
- Specific programs responding the employment, training, education and social inclusion needs of the families of people on temporary work visas.

2.5 Improve access to the service system

There is need for greater and more targeted support in regional areas targeted for settlement. This needs to ensure more culturally responsive service provision including training for mainstream service providers including use of interpreters. This is especially important in some contexts where there are few if any specialist providers or where some mainstream service providers have had little or no exposure to newly arrived migrants. Regional areas targeted for settlement may struggle to meet demands for service so increased capacity for service deliver and rigorous preparatory service system planning are essential.

3. **National productive capacity**

The role migration has played and contributes to building Australia's long term productive capacity
The profile of skilled migration to Australia and the extent to which Australia is fully utilising the skills of all migrants
Potential government initiatives to better assist migrant communities establish business enterprises.

3.1 The role migration has played and contributes to building Australia's long term productive capacity.

In regional areas the contribution and benefits of an inclusive economy are often not promoted but these include:

- new knowledge,
- ideas and economic growth;
- new niche
- markets with unique products and skills
- "Direct Fiscal Benefits"- cash flow into our economy

For rural and regional communities, benefits also include increased population, much-needed labour supply, economic growth, increased numbers of young people in ageing areas and a more diverse social fabric.

Supporting CALD communities in regional areas might include:

- Better resourcing of community workers that support CALD communities in regional areas
- Increased strategies for professional and qualified interpreters in regional areas
- Improved service planning, particularly where significant populations of particular communities exist or are emerging
- Place based approaches that develop local or regional strategies involving all stakeholders to address issues and concerns including the needs of CALD communities.

3.2 Employment

Employment plays an essential role in the extent that an individual or household can participate fully in a range of life opportunities. Employment is a basis for building social relationships, learning about the wider community and various aspects of day to day living, developing skills, confidence and a greater capacity to navigate the settlement process. Where people enter Australia under a skilled migration program, productivity outcomes are significant, however, proficiency in English and recognition of skills and qualifications are essential underpinning factors to this productivity which highlights the issues and needs of humanitarian entrants (Productivity Commission 2006).

Lack of employment, no rental history and income derived from social security are also significant issues in the process of securing and sustaining appropriate and affordable housing which in turn further impacts on the capacity to find and sustain employment. Some newly arrived people have significant difficulty with language barriers and with recognition of prior qualifications and skills. As new arrivals, people often lack the social capital and established networks that can assist with the process of finding employment.

At a time when the unemployment rate for all Australians was 5.3% overall, the unemployment rate for people born in North Africa and the Middle East was 12% (for 2004-2005, Kryger, 2005). ECCQ interviewed a sample of 107 people from new and emerging communities in 2009 (all humanitarian entrants) and their incomes were derived from the following sources:

- 70% from a government pension or benefit
- 10% from part-time work
- 16.5% from full-time work.

ECCQ, 2009:33

FECCA highlighted that refugees have far higher unemployment rates than other migrants and quote the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) saying that the unemployment rate for humanitarian entrants is 32% (FECCA, 2009).

ECCQ proposes the following as a way of reducing unemployment among particularly disadvantaged communities:

- Set targets for employing a culturally diverse workforce within government agencies
- The development of an employment strategy including targets for CALD communities and a particular focus on refugee communities and low socio-economic CALD populations
- A target for reducing unemployment among CALD communities with a focus on new and emerging communities and humanitarian entrants
- Increase work experience programs that engage the private sector, government and community sector and which include English language training as an integral component
- Provide funding and support to achieve skills and qualification recognition and for employment related skills such as driving
- Build the capacity of employers through education and awareness raising to reduce discrimination and racism and its impacts on access to jobs
- Develop regional programs focussed on employment outcomes for CALD communities.
- Anti-discrimination measures which monitor and report on discrimination and exclusion in workforce.

3.3 Family support: a prevention and early intervention approach

The links between productivity and early childhood safety and opportunities are well established. ECCQ places a high priority on positive policies and programs that effectively support CALD families and result in optimal opportunities for children to realise their full potential. ECCQ is concerned that the National Framework for Protecting Australia's children is silent on issues concerning CALD families.

While the system of universal service provision is important, culture strongly impacts on parenting beliefs and practices. The system for supporting and protecting children must take into account practices that improve outcomes for CALD families.

The following issues are drivers for change:

- CALD families and children face a number of challenges in accessing support and services. These challenges place families at a higher risk of tertiary-level involvement with Child Safety Services.
- The use of interpreters and improvements to cultural competency within the child protection system are needed.
- The rate of notifications and of children coming into care is increasing yet it is not clear how many of those are from CALD backgrounds as data collection is not consistent and there is no reporting on CALD status.
- There is a need for culturally diverse and appropriate paradigms for practice (Mettler, 2010:7).

There is a need for strong national leadership and models that best respond to the needs of CALD families and children. This requires approaches that achieve:

- Better information to families and the services that support them
- Improved workforce training in relation to the needs of CALD families
- Culturally appropriate models of family support
- Improved engagement of interpreters
- A more diversified child protection workforce
- Mandatory data collection regarding CALD families
- Improved research into responding to the needs of CALD families in the child protection system.

Summary of recommendations

1. A national definition of multiculturalism is needed that recognises all cultures and is a foundation for ensuring equality of access by all Australians to social, economic, political and cultural opportunities.
2. The priority themes within Australia's social inclusion agenda should include cultural diversity.
3. Australia's multicultural agenda should be driven from the Office of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.
4. Data collection and analysis at the national level is needed to establish a framework for measuring the inclusion CALD communities. In particular a social baseline should be established that includes relevant indicators of disadvantage for particular groups as a basis for measuring improvements over time.
5. Data collection, analysis and reporting should be undertaken about multiple experiences of disadvantage to understand ways of responding that reflect cultural needs and a focus on better access to services and resources. On the foundation of this data collection, it is then possible to target specific strategies that overcome significant experiences of disadvantage such as within refugee communities and Pacific Islander communities.
6. National housing and homelessness policies and strategies should include a specific focus on addressing the needs of CALD individuals and households. This should include targets for reducing the homelessness of CALD communities and outcome measures to determine when households have been able to access long term housing solutions and where homelessness has been ended.
7. National strategies to engage the real estate industry are needed to overcome the exclusion of certain CALD community from the full range of private rental housing market options.
8. Strategies are needed that address spatial disadvantage throughout Australia and in particular, specific strategies should be engaged to address the impacts of spatial disadvantage on migrants. This should include mapping settlement patterns against available data on spatial disadvantage to determine high priority areas for place-based responses.
9. Strategies are needed that strengthen cultural competency of all federal government services as well as agencies that are federally funded. This could be achieved through specific training programs, the implementation of relevant organisational standards and the promotion of leading practice models. All agencies should be required to measure access by CALD communities to services and also measure the outcomes achieved through service delivery.

10. Peer leader models should be adopted and promoted as a way of building a multicultural workforce and to improve culturally appropriate service delivery.
11. Expand bi-lingual and multicultural workforce models in a range of human services settings including health, education, welfare, employment and income support agencies.
12. Set targets for a multicultural workforce in government and government funded services.
13. Strengthen the commitment and practices relating to access to interpreters. Build and consolidate the interpreter industry through national strategies.
14. Improve language services, strengthen ESL programs and ensure the implementation of the review of AMEP.
15. Drive national models for supporting CALD families and children which are culturally sensitive.
16. Include targets for reducing unemployment among particular CALD communities.
17. Increase work experience programs and drive national campaigns to engage employers in strategies to employ a diverse workforce.
18. Fund and support better systems for achieving skills and qualification recognition.
19. Fund a national anti-racism strategy which includes capacity for regional strategies that are practical and which give capacity to local areas to confront specific aspects of racism (housing markets, employment, school etc.).

Contact

Please contact ECCQ's Policy and Advocacy Officer, Fiona Caniglia on 3844 9166 or at advocacy@eccq.com.au for more information if required.

Yours sincerely'

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Executive Manager

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