FECCA

Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia

Here to Stay: Australia's Multicultural Reality

Submission to the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Migration Inquiry into Multiculturalism

APRIL 2011

Contents

About FECCA

FECCA is the national peak body representing and advocating for culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities. Our role is to advocate and promote issues on behalf of our constituency to government, business and to the broader community. FECCA promotes Australian multiculturalism, community harmony, social justice, community participation and the rejection of discrimination so as to build a productive, culturally rich Australian society. FECCA's policies are designed around the concepts of empowerment and inclusion, and are formulated with the common good of all Australians in mind.

Executive Summary

In this submission, FECCA has focused on the areas where we have most expertise and can add value. FECCA's national Access and Equity consultations have provided us with a wealth of current grassroots information regarding the experience of migrant Australians with government services. This has been the basis of most of the current submission.

We have also drawn upon our major submission "Different But Equal: FECCA's National Multicultural Agenda", which is a leadership document in the sector, to inform the theoretical basis of our position. In our discussion on multiculturalism, globalisation and social inclusion, we have aimed to locate the essential common concepts through these weighty discourses. This seems the most practical and useful way to draw upon the interplay of all these perspectives in framing a holistic position for multiculturalism in Australia.

FECCA would like to acknowledge the generosity of the many Australians who have participated in our consultations. We also acknowledge the many partner organisations who have supported these consultations and have enabled the collection of crucial grassroots narratives.

The recommendations are listed below. For more information about the commentary and context, please refer to the body of the submission. There are also valuable examples of innovative service provision in the submission which will further inform the recommendations.

FECCA's recommendations:

1. That there is a resourced commitment to research in the multicultural arena with particular emphasis on the creation of new social policy discussions as well as data on the benefits of cultural diversity in Australia.

2. That there is an independent audit of the capacity of current systems and services in government to deliver the desired outcomes of the new multicultural policy, and that these findings inform the design and implementation of new programs.

3. That the multicultural policy develop separate and comprehensive strategies to tackle

   - Global labour market immigrants and cultural issues related to them

   - The strengthening of social inclusion priorities to include cultural minorities and lack of English language skills as vulnerability indicators.

4. That equality is incorporated as a practical component of cultural management. This can be enabled by the creation of formal structures of engagement that will recognise cultural values and differences on an equal basis across social and legal systems.

5. That the multicultural policy includes strong measures to recognise the complex factors of participation. This will take into account intra community engagement, which is a different and exclusive sort of "public sphere".

6. That the multicultural policy acknowledge the operation of cultural ostracism practiced by many cultural communities, and its consequences on so-called "deviant" individuals in these communities.

7. That the multicultural policy look at skill sets needed to deliver social inclusion, not just in terms of the migrants but also for the service providers and others who are at the coalface of inter cultural engagement.

8. That support for the acquisition of English language skills is recognised as a life-course issue for a range of migrants, including aged migrant Australians.

9. That the anti racism strategy recognise Australia's continued discrimination towards the First Australians as the starting point of transformative strategies.

10. That the anti racism strategy enshrine equality of all cultures in its systems of intervention.

11. That the anti racism strategy recommend the reform of processes and structures where there is an erosion of rights due to cultural differences, and where these do not contravene human rights issues.

12. That the anti racism strategy develop a strong communications strategy including public campaigns to reject racist discourses in any guise, including as political communication.

13. That AMEP ensure courses teach practical English. This means that the approach and resources used in teaching should be focused on the acquisition of 'everyday', employment focused English skills. FECCA has found that some people working in settlement services are now providing this service privately because of this deficiency in government service provision.

14. That AMEP services provide flexibility in the 510 hours of teaching allocated to new arrivals. This is to take into account that the English proficiency of new arrivals ranges from absolute beginner to almost functional levels. Therefore some new arrivals may need less or more teaching time than others.[1]

15. That there is continuous audit and evaluation of the AMEP services, particularly given that many contracts are held by private providers.

16. That greater focus and resources be allocated to skilled migrants. This will assist their capacity for greater participation and contribution to Australia's wider society and economy.

17. That services recognise, value, and respect cultural competency and/or CALD expertise as a legitimate skill.

18. That staff undertake cultural competency training in order to promote better service through the elimination of discrimination.

19. That information provision is targeted, using outreach where necessary, and addresses cultural preferences. This will include building the capacity of Australian systems to communicate directly with communities in successful competition with overseas satellite sources of communication.

20. That information provision address the language diversity and range of English

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[1] Contribution of Sydney Chinese Services Interagency, 2011.

proficiency within new and emerging communities through translated materials, interpreters, and bilingual service workers. Information provision must incorporate different modes of information delivery so that all persons from new and emerging communities, regardless of their literacy, English proficiency, digital knowledge levels, cultural background, and/or level of comprehension of Western bureaucratic systems, are given an equal opportunity to access the information necessary for their full understanding of, and participation in, the wider Australian community.

21. That there is relevant service provision including building capacity of ethno specific service providers and community infrastructure through enhanced funding and government support.

22. That organisations undertake capacity building supporting skill requirements for employment, including workplace language courses, skills recognition and tackling discrimination.

23. That there is the inclusion of CALD input into the design, implementation and assessment of services.

24. That volunteer opportunities be established through partnerships between settlement service programs and mainstream organisations. This would facilitate a connection with services and employment opportunities beyond the initial settlement period.

25. That all workplaces that recruit volunteers be provided with cultural competency training.

26. That in the implementation of volunteering strategies employers are mindful of the Occupational Health and Safety of their volunteers.

27. That there is greater emphasis within productive diversity discourses on delivery of equity for all employees.

28. That there is recognition in such measures of the "quality of life" issues which are inherent in enhanced and equitable work conditions for all employees, such as innovation and creativity.

29. That there is research and data developed in the area of productive diversity and ethnic entrepreneurship where there has been a gap for the last 10 years.

30. That systems and structures respond to new business models such as "cottage industry" model and microfinance initiatives in supportive ways.

31. That barriers to business initiatives be addressed, including skills recognition and language and training issues.

32. That there is provision to deliver orientation programs to temporary residents which include a component of cultural awareness, rights and responsibilities and systems knowledge education.

33. That processes of obtaining skilled migration visas be examined, including the content and parameters of the points test so that this does not disadvantage some cultures and communities.

34. That there are appropriate employment pathways for skilled migrants which support them in finding work that is at the right level and appropriate for their professional qualifications.

35. That the government support small business owners by removing complex and bureaucratic processes that act as a barrier for many migrant communities to start new enterprises.

36. That these businesses, which are initially culture specific, are recognised as pathways to broader engagement with mainstream goods and services.

37. That small businesses in regional and rural settings are recognised and supported as a strong way forward in creating sustainable settlement in such regions, and also as catering to the cultural needs of new communities in these areas.

38. That structured environments are created with regard to flexibility and innovative ways to engage with new business models such as cottage industries.

Introduction

Multiculturalism in Australia has been reinstated by the recent announcement of "The People of Australia - Australia's Multicultural Policy". At a time when many countries, and even some people within Australia, are pondering the success or failure of multiculturalism, the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship Chris Bowen has celebrated the "genius of multiculturalism".

At this important point in history, FECCA pauses to examine the nature of this genius and how we can continue to harness the richness of multiculturalism in the future. In this document we present before you the many successes of multiculturalism. However, it would be remiss of us to ignore the nature of project multiculturalism which is dynamic and evolving. In this regard, we also look at the gaps in the current debate and how we can strengthen our policy by addressing unmet needs.

Multiculturalism is hard work. It takes resources, and often challenges beliefs and customs that some of us hold dear. However, FECCA does not believe that we have a choice to deny multiculturalism. People all over the world live in culturally diverse societies and this diversity is only set to increase. The societies that emerge successful in this transformative period are those that look for, and find, the brave answers.

In proposing that we engage with the new reality of multiculturalism, FECCA does not suggest that we surrender values that are important human rights. However, we do have to engage in a dialogue about transforming values if we see that others can serve us better. For example, the importance of family and community rights in many cultures offers a valuable counterpoint to the individualistic essence of our own definition of human rights. By incorporating some of these values more firmly into our sense of Australianness, we can only enhance the holistic nature of our own human rights concepts.

The new multicultural policy is the first step towards Australia's new journey. FECCA wholeheartedly commends this step. In addition, we also offer insights into what needs to be included in the policy as it is developed and formed over the next period. The voices against multiculturalism are increasingly voices of reason (for example, Greg Sheridan's article in The Australian on 2 April) raising real and critical issues for its future. The new multicultural policy has to face these difficult conversations without shirking responsibility, and must propose strategies that will engage with them.

To service the government's point of view, it is FECCA's strong belief that Australia needs to emphatically recognise the benefits of cultural diversity. The most important necessity in order to enable this recognition is to support research and data in this arena. Currently there is a gap in the availability of such evidence, as multicultural research has not been supported for the past 10 years.

It is also imperative that there is an audit or evaluation undertaken of the existing capacity of government services to support the aims and programs that will form part of the new multicultural policy. Without this foundational knowledge, we cannot design programs to ensure desired outcomes by addressing gaps in the current systems.

FECCA recommends:

1. That there is a resourced commitment to research in the multicultural arena with particular emphasis on the creation of new social policy discussions as well as data on the benefits of cultural diversity in Australia.

2. That there is an independent audit of the capacity of current systems and services in government to deliver the desired outcomes of the new multicultural policy, and that these findings inform the design and implementation of new programs.

Multiculturalism, Globalisation and Social Inclusion

1. **The role of multiculturalism in the Federal government's social inclusion agenda[2]**

Multiculturalism, social inclusion and globalisation are essentially discourses about culture even when they avoid directly mentioning it. Multiculturalism is of course underpinned by the notion of cultural diversity, social inclusion ideally ought to consider culture as a key aspect of the inclusion-exclusion spectrum, and globalisation deals with cultures that are transnational, often created by global business and labour markets.

In FECCA's view, all three concepts would benefit from centralising culture and the machinations of cultural transformations as they affect social structures.

Globalisation is loosely used as a positive and inevitable state of affairs related principally to business and trade. However, globalisation is also about cultural and power transformations. Primarily it is based on the spread of capitalist western business models, which some scholars have disparagingly called the new colonialism. Some facts about globalisation include:

- It has not always created equity and equality. As is evident in many developing countries, globalisation can enhance the distance between the rich and the poor.
- It does not always lead to a uniform globalised culture or a globalised community. In many situations, it serves to emphasise the local and the national over the global and the transnational.
- It creates tensions between traditional local knowledge, some of which could be symbolic and ritual, and globalised knowledge.

Globalisation influences our national debates in domains such as

- Skilled migration
- Environmental sustainability issues including population growth.

There is a need to unpack the discourse of globalisation rather than succumb to a naive acceptance of its benefits. Part of this unpacking involves recognising the cultural impacts of

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[2] The discussion in this part of the submission draws on the work of many theorists and scholars whose full details are provided in the bibliography at the end. Also refer to FECCA's "Different But Equal: FECCA's National Multicultural Agenda" (details provided in the bibliography section).

globalisation, such as its capacity to create enclaves of cultural isolation rather than a transnational globalised culture, and the consequences of civic disengagement that can result from a labour force in constant transition in the global economy. The structures of cultural management in Australia need to recognise the characteristics of such groups and have proactive measures in place to facilitate their participation and inclusion.

The role of multiculturalism within this globalised dialogue has to be examined and situated with care. Plurality or multiculturalism with limits can become a way of enforcing unequal power relations on migrant cultures. A form of multiculturalism which reinforces cultural hierarchies and does not challenge the existing power relations in a society is only a facade and a tokenistic measure. We also do not want to create civic disengagement due to cultural enclaves, as has occurred in societies that practise assimilationist models of public policy.

There are 3 concepts that link multiculturalism to both globalisation and social inclusion discourses:

- Equality

- Race

- Identity

Equality

It is with good reason that FECCA centralised the notion of equality in our "Different but Equal: FECCA's National Multicultural Agenda". The challenge of true multiculturalism is recognising the transformative power of "equal dialogues". In order to do this, multiculturalism will need to:

- Redefine structures of power in society by recognising that all cultures are equal and that no culture is privileged over another;
- Create spaces of self determination where cultures and communities control their own definitions of their identity and its transformation, rather than this being prescribed to them;

- Reject "cultural racism" whereby cultures are "fossilised"[3] and reduced to stereotypes, thus allowing no space for interrogation or engagement on all sides; and
- Become "polycentric"[4] so that it does not privilege any one group above others as having the role of the legitimiser.

The very same and urgent need for transformative equality is at the heart of the success of any social inclusion policy. A social inclusion policy such as the current Australian one, which focuses only on bringing in the outsiders rather than adapting society to accommodate them and their valuable contributions, has been critiqued as a weak approach. It negates the difficult conversations about race and culture which have tremendous intersectional impact with every other category prioritised in the policy.

Equality is the transformative tool in all of the above discourses. A system that limits equality in any way, even under the guise of law, pre-existing behaviour and values, or fear or security issues, fundamentally contravenes its human rights obligations.

In FECCA's national agenda we have defined equality as being at the heart of a society that has succeeded in truly embracing cultural diversity. In the broadest sense, equality denotes equal power relationships devoid of oppression. It means that there is an absence of marginalisation, exploitation, coercion, and cultural imperialism, and a presence of full participation by all people at individual, civic and political levels. It is thus the most crucial tool and measure of the democratic reality of a society as opposed to its democratic aspirations.

Opponents of equality bring up spectres of cultural pluralism and cultural relativism to point out the dangers of any engagement with different value systems aimed at renegotiating current social structures. Many European countries have for a long time followed a policy of assimilation in their multicultural policy. This has not created a homogenous society in any of those countries. On the contrary, it has created deep chasms between cultures and between the mainstream and other immigrant cultures, which manifest as ghettos and as regular political and social unrest.

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[3] Subrata Bobby Banerjee and Stephen Linstead (2001) "Globalisation, Multiculturalism and other Fictions: Colonialism for the New Millenium?" in *Organization,* 8: 683, Sage Publications. Accessed at: http://org.sagepub.com/content/8/4/683 on 14 April 2011-04-20, p.707
[4] *ibid.* p.708

What FECCA proposes is that it is only through inter and cross cultural engagement and dialogue in an equal playing field that we can create change on all sides, thereby establishing a harmonious and stable Australia.

Race

Anti discrimination is also at the core of a social inclusion agenda. A strong social inclusion policy is not just about addressing vulnerability, but about proactively transforming social structures to eliminate racism and inequality.

The anti racism strategy, which is a key principle of the new multicultural policy, is fundamental to the social inclusion outcomes. Social inclusion is about the spaces between cultures and races, and about creating "proximity" between individuals and communities. Therefore race, which often includes culture and other aspects of culture such as religion, becomes a major factor in these in-between spaces. Recognition of race as a primary factor of exclusion is necessary for any social inclusion measures aimed at creating transformation and equality. The inclusion of discrimination, race and culture in the social inclusion agenda creates a policy which will focus on:

- Restructuring the very architecture of Australian society to represent its cultural diversity;
- Going beyond addressing barriers to participation in sectors such as employment, and looking at more endemic and less visible issues such as parallel employment markets which are exploitative and racialised, underemployment or under participation of some Australians, the invisibility of some sectors of the Australian populace in the public sphere, the lack of representation of racially different Australians at decision making levels, and so on;
- Human rights commissions that actively promote rights education and are not just passive recipients of complaints; and
- The strengthening of community organisations and infrastructures which are at the coalface of racialised interactions and can advocate and provide leadership in the transformative dialogues.

The issue of racism is the elephant in the room in multicultural debates. Race is the dark stream that flows through globalisation, social inclusion and multicultural debates.

Research in Australia has shown that about 10% of Australians hold racist views and that many indicators of social cohesion are significantly down over the last period[5]. However, the public view is that Australia is a tolerant country. The Scanlon report called for vigilance in maintaining this harmony, especially as new cultures and beliefs challenge our own. It is important to remember in this context that we have not yet recognised the First Australians and arrived at any reconciliation with the original Australians. We must acknowledge that we have entrenched issues about racism which are unresolved, and that these attitudes are not without impact on vulnerable Australians.

Identity

Identity is the third commonality between social inclusion, globalisation and multiculturalism. Social inclusion is based on notions of a national identity, and yet past and present notions of national identity in Australia tend to privilege the dominant Anglo culture. The definition of a national identity in Australia has evolved from very specific definitions during the White Australia policy to a current abstract set of values related to ideas of the "fair go and social responsibility"[6]. In reality, this seemingly open-ended definition functions more as exclusion than inclusion. It locates responsibility in the "other" and expects them to return the benefits they receive from the state, whether they be refugees or recipients of state welfare. It is crucial that national identity rhetoric also recognises the contributions constantly made to Australia by those perceived as "other" in the community. In being abstract, current national identity values are also opportunistic and can be used with impunity to ostracise people by labelling them "unAustralian." Such "master narratives" can be dangerous where they have not been contested due to unequal power structures in society, as they contravene not only the tenets of multiculturalism but the very idea of Australia as a nation of fairness and equal opportunity.

In his recent speech at the Parliament House, Waleed Aly presented a case for recognition of "dual authenticity" within discourses about nationalism in immigrant societies. His view was that seeking a denial of one's cultural origins creates distress, both in those who surrender their cultural identities and those that do not. The possibility to be both

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[5] Markus, Andrew (2010) *Mapping Social Cohesion: The Scanlon Foundation Surveys Summary Report 2010*, Scanlon Foundation, Australian Multicultural Foundation and Monash University: Victoria, p. 41

[6] Harris, Patricia and Williams, Vicki (2003) "Social Inclusion, National Identity and the Moral Imagination" in *The Drawing Board: An Australian Review of Public Affairs, School of Economics and Political Science*, University of Sydney, Accessed at http://mams.rmit.edu.au/tey6xiqnkb4 on 14 April 2011 p.215

Australian and of your own culture in equal measure, and for this to be recognised as the hallmark of Australian identity, is the best outcome for a truly multicultural nation. This again requires a level playing field where we can all engage as equals, regardless of religion or culture, in all of the institutions and structures that form the public sphere of Australian life. Through acknowledging and embracing cultural diversity as a fundamental aspect of Australian identity, we can begin to move towards a policy and lived reality in which the unique contributions of all cultures in Australia combine to form an inclusive , equitable, and welcoming whole.

As the social policy of note, the Social Inclusion policy has to actively intersect with the multicultural policy in order to address gaps, particularly in issues of cultural management. Globalisation forms the context of both discourses and the cultural outcomes of this movement will need to be factored into both policies.

Australia's social inclusion policy is one based on vulnerability compared to the strength based models in some other societies. It identifies a range of vulnerabilities including unemployment, housing and disability. Culture is treated as an afterthought where there is a reference to the barriers faced by new and emerging communities. The acute disadvantages faced by migrants who have a lack of English language skills is not considered as a vulnerability.

However, there are many aspects of culture in its broad sense that can become a barrier to participation and inclusion, such as

- Language, as lack of English language skills is a significant and endemic barrier for many cultural migrants in all groups. This has impact on employment, education, systems knowledge, and access to services for migrants.

- Some groups of migrants have specific disadvantages based on their migration experience including torture and trauma history.

- Some cultural groups have specific beliefs that can create exclusion for their members, particularly women. "Deviants" from the norm in some cultures are also ostracised from their own communities (such as unmarried mothers, LGBTI, those who fall in love outside their own cultures or religions, and those who reject some beliefs of the community such as arranged marriages). These people become pariahs with no community or family support.

Discourses of multiculturalism, globalisation and social inclusion have to come to terms with culture as the overarching social narrative. Culture is the universal "human content": we all have a culture[7].

In our submission, we centralise the role of culture in our society and aim to create transformation to ensure social justice for all Australians.

FECCA recommends:

3. That the multicultural policy develop separate and comprehensive strategies to tackle

    - Global labour market immigrants and cultural issues related to them;

    - The strengthening of social inclusion priorities to include cultural minorities and lack of English language skills as vulnerability indicators.

4. That equality is incorporated as a practical component of cultural management. This can be enabled by the creation of formal structures of engagement that will recognise cultural values and differences on an equal basis across social and legal systems.

5. That the multicultural policy includes strong measures to recognise the complex factors of participation. This will take into account intra community engagement, which is a different and exclusive sort of "public sphere".

6. That the multicultural policy acknowledges the operation of cultural ostracism practiced by many cultural communities, and its consequences on so-called "deviant" individuals in these communities.

7. That the multicultural policy look at skill sets needed to deliver social inclusion, not just in terms of the migrants but also for the service providers and others who are at the coalface of inter cultural engagement.

8. That support for the acquisition of English language skills is recognised as a lifecourse issue for a range of migrants, including aged migrant Australians.

9. That the anti racism strategy recognise Australia's continued discrimination towards the First Australians as the starting point of transformative strategies.

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[7] Parekh, Bhikhu (2000) *Rethinking Multiculturalism*, Macmillan Press: London.

10. That the anti racism strategy enshrine equality of all cultures in its systems of intervention.

11. That the anti racism strategy recommends the reform of processes and structures where there is an erosion of rights due to cultural differences, and where these do not contravene human rights issues.

12. That the anti racism strategy develop a strong communications strategy including public campaigns to reject racist discourses in any guise, including as political communication.

Contribution, Participation, and Integration

2. The contribution of diaspora communities to Australia's relationships with Europe, the UK, Middle East and the immediate Asia-Pacific region

The advantages of global diasporas are manifold and include cultural, commercial and political dimensions. The networks that global diasporas bring to local communities is an obvious advantage. These include business and political networks which can enhance links between countries in terms of trade and cultural exchange opportunities.

There are many large diasporas in Australia including those from the United Kingdom, Italy and Greece as well as the more new and emerging ones such as China and India. FECCA's primary focus is on working with the diasporas in terms of the local issues regarding cultural management. We therefore do not have the capacity to comment on the issues of international relations.

Settlement and Participation

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

Defining what it means to fully participate and integrate into Australia's broader society is fundamental to establishing the basic components for what makes settlement programs most suitable, effective and sustaining for new migrants. FECCA, through its submission "Different But Equal: FECCA's National Multicultural Agenda", has articulated these terms through the following three foundational pillars of social interaction[8].

1. **Belonging**

    Belonging is the outcome of the acceptance, celebration and creation of identity through a respectful and voluntary process initiated by individuals in response to their desire to be part of their new home in Australia. The importance of belonging cannot be underestimated and fundamentally affects the ability of individuals and communities to be able to function in any society.

2. **Participation**

    Belonging enables fulfilled participation in Australian society through various ways such as employment, voluntary work and engagement in cultural life. Fulfilled participation refers to the capacity of people to interact at their full potential and to be recognised and utilised for all their talents and skills. It also means being open to new and innovative ways of defining participation so that people from all cultures can offer new skills and insights to enrich our society.

3. **Contribution**

    The outcome of fulfilled participation is contribution by all Australians that enables pride in their work and in the experience of "owning" the shaping of Australia. Their investment in Australia will foster ever-strengthening ties to this country. Contribution also requires us to be open as a society to the wisdom of other cultures

[8] FECCA (2010) *Different But Equal: FECCA's National Multicultural Agenda*, FECCA: Canberra.

and traditions, to reject primitivist perceptions, and to strengthen our ability to show leadership and innovation in creating spaces of equal dialogue in all matters.

FECCA proposes that these interdependent pillars should serve as the basis for the aims and capacity of settlement services provision. Built into these pillars is the recognition of the essential tools, skills and resources that new migrants and refugees need to achieve in order to participate and to be part of the broader Australian society. At a basic level these include:

- English language
- Information
- Orientation
- Safety and security
- Systems knowledge
- Digital literacy
- Housing
- Health
- Education and training
- Employment
- Access to transport
- Networks

In a sense these tools, skills and resources can be seen as the social determinants that enable, or act as a barrier to, participation in Australia's wider society. Hence without achieving these, new migrants and refugees face significant intersectional disadvantage and marginalisation. It is therefore essential to be holistic and target these issues in settlement service provision.

In order for new migrants and refugees to have the best chance at acquiring these skills and resources, FECCA identifies the provision of culturally competent service as key. This means being mindful of cultural and linguistic difference and catering accordingly in all aspects of service provision. Examples of such a practice include providing linguistically and culturally appropriate interpreters, training staffs to be respectful of cultural customs, and maintaining policies and procedures that do not discriminate on ethnic, cultural or religious grounds. By mainstreaming such practices throughout all levels of service provision catering to the fundamental participatory needs of new migrants and refuges, services will have the capacity

to become relevant and effective in enabling the full participation and integration of new migrants.

Whilst there are many emerging initiatives that are supporting Australia's growing diversity and the productive and expansive role of new migrants in Australian society, there is also significant room for innovation and outreach. Through a range of good practice model examples that operate on both an individual and community support level, FECCA aims to highlight innovative ideas that deal directly with key challenges in the initial settlement period. These models are largely grassroots and often unfunded initiatives that have been sourced through suggestions from both community services and CALD communities themselves. In the following section, FECCA provides a discussion of several key issues within, and case studies that address problems in, settlement services for new migrants and refugees.

Innovative Ideas for Settlement Services

English Language Services[9]

Language is the key to empowered participation for all Australians. It is fundamental to culture. The complexity of language acquisition is underestimated in the current programs. FECCA's consultations indicate that the duration, the training modes and the lack of bi-lingual teachers mean that it is quite common for people to acquire few skills in English after these courses. Courses need to take into account the significant marginalisation of some groups, such as women with children and people with mental and health barriers. It is important that the programs recognise that language acquisition also demands understanding a new and often alien culture and its beliefs and customs. The failure to include this dimension in the current courses creates low learning outcomes for some communities, particularly where cultural differences are most profound.

FECCA recommends:

13. That AMEP ensure courses teach practical English. This means that the approach and resources used in teaching should be focused on the acquisition of 'everyday', employment focused English skills. FECCA has found that some people working in settlement services are now providing this service privately because of this deficiency in government service provision.[10]

14. That AMEP services provide flexibility in the 510 hours of teaching allocated to new arrivals. This is to take into account that the English proficiency of new arrivals ranges from absolute beginner to almost functional levels. Therefore some new arrivals may need less or more teaching time than others.[11]

15. Continuous audit and evaluation of the AMEP services, particularly given that many contracts are held by private providers.

16. That greater focus and resources be allocated to skilled migrants. This will assist their capacity for greater participation in, and contribution to, Australia's wider society and economy.

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[9] FECCA (2010) *Different But Equal: FECCA's National Multicultural Agenda*, FECCA: Canberra, p. 20.
[10] FECCA (2010) *Different But Equal: FECCA's National Multicultural Agenda*, FECCA: Canberra.
[11] Contribution of Sydney Chinese Services Interagency, 2011.

Information Provision and Orientation

Providing appropriate settlement services is a challenge in itself. However, making such services accessible for new migrants with various levels of English and digital literacy and systems knowledge is an additional challenge. Continually identified as a barrier by CALD communities and CALD services in particular, improving the distribution of information on available services is a primary arena for innovative solutions in settlement service provision[12].

Information provision needs to be prioritized as part of service provision. This is to ensure that specific services are utilised by those most in need. In addition, adequate information provision in all areas prevents the currently more well-known services from being overburdened with work for which they are not qualified or funded.

CALD specific information hubs delivered through settlement services are evident across Australia and operate to enhance the access of CALD communities to services through the provision of CALD sensitive information. There have been continued calls for the development and expansion of this type of service[13].

Case Study

Migrant Information Centre, Eastern Melbourne[14]

Funded primarily through the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) and Department of Health and Ageing (DOHA), the Migrant Information Centre is a settlement service which provides information primarily to humanitarian and family streamed entrants within the first five years of arrival and settlement. They offer a wide range of information provision methods. Their success is based on the following features:

- Respectful and attentive customer service that responds directly to the needs of their local community;

- A safe and accessible meeting space for community social interaction, networking and learning;

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[12] FECCA (2011) *Access and Equity Consultations 2010-2011*, FECCA: Canberra.
[13] *Ibid.*
[14] FECCA (2011) *Access and Equity Consultations 2010-2011*, FECCA: Canberra. Also see Migrant Information Centre: Eastern Melbourne website: <http://www.miceastmelb.com.au/>.

- Face-to-face and group information provision consultations;

- Information sessions that are CALD sensitive through the provision of ethno-specific and/or language-specific sessions;

- The provision of bilingual employees and interpreters where needed;

- That tailoring of information sessions to the needs and requests of the community. These have included a wide range of topics such as women's and men's health, packing a healthy school lunch, crime prevention and employment; and

- Continuous attention to evaluation and improvement of services.

Through these elements the Migrant Information Centre has enriched its community and enabled new migrants and refugees to have a greater capacity to access equitable services. The continuation and expansion of funding for this type of information service across Australia, particularly in rural areas with significant new migrant populations, is a major step to engaging communities so that they can participate fully in the broader Australian society.

Systems Knowledge

Implementing CALD sensitive grassroots programs that directly introduce and orient new migrants and refugees to Australia's systems has been identified as a significant need. In particular, CALD communities and service providers have pinpointed basic day-to-day personalised orientation as an essential pathway to participation in society. This has been highlighted frequently throughout FECCA's 2011 Access and Equity Consultations in rural, regional and metropolitan areas alike[15].

Becoming accustomed to the day-to-day tasks that are often taken for granted in mainstream Australia can be a difficult process. Members of the CALD service sector have found that not attending to financial management in particular is a key source of family breakdown and disadvantage for many new migrants and refugees. Being able and aware of the need to pay bills, fill in forms and budget for essentials such a food, clothing, healthcare and education activities can be a complicated process. This is often due to the following:

- Cultural and systems differences between countries of origin and Australia;
- The experience of living under extreme circumstances, such as in a refugee camp, a conflict zone or detention centre, where the need to attend to such tasks exists at a minimal level or not at all;
- A lack of available and accessible culturally and linguistically appropriate information materials;
- A lack of available and accessible culturally and linguistically appropriate services; and
- An overburdened and under resourced CALD service sector.

Providing information and assistance on finance and the systems that govern them is a step that can have a positive impact both in the initial settlement period and beyond. In particular, providing this form of support helps to ease the stress and anxiety placed on migrants and refugees settling in a new country.

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[15] FECCA (2011) *Access and Equity Consultations 2010-2011*, FECCA: Canberra

Case Study

Day-to-day Systems and Finance Orientation for New Migrants and Refugees[16]

Based within settlement services, simple grassroots outreach programs have proven to be a helpful and practical method of administering systems learning and support to new migrants and refugees.

The successes of the grassroots approach are due to the following features:

- Face-to-face meetings with new migrants and refugees either within a community centre or in their own home;
- Trust and confidentiality;
- The provision of service through an interpreter or bilingual community worker;
- Clear introduction to basic systems of Australian welfare and support systems applicable to clients, i.e. Centrelink, Medicare, Housing, AMES and Job Services Australia (JSA);
- Assistance with working through the systems, i.e. form filling and guidance and support to attend interviews and services;
- Dedication to rights awareness; and
- A commitment to enabling and empowering new migrants and refugees to negotiate and understand the systems in the future by themselves.

This form of support has seen benefits which include increased school attendance by children from new migrant families and greater access to welfare and services previously unknown to families. It is an essential and beneficial step to encouraging and enabling new migrants and refugees to participate in Australian society.

However, although settlement services provide this form of basic outreach, they are often restricted by inadequate funding, staff shortages, lack of expertise and time limitations. When this service is offered it is often on a voluntary basis. Therefore wider implementation of these valuable programs and services need greater financial support and resources. Future funding should also include the recognition and allocation of funding for this specific role.

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[16] *Ibid.*

Case study

The Northern Territory Working Women's Centre[17]

The Centre is a community-based, independent organization that provides information, advice and support to low income women about workplace problems. The Centre services the whole of the Territory. Although based in Darwin, they also make regional and remote visits. The Centre's objectives are to provide accessible information, referral and support services that not only increase Northern Territory (NT) women's knowledge of their workplace rights and entitlements under the law, but also improve those rights and entitlements for all NT women through individual and systemic advocacy.

There are presently three Industrial Liaison Officers at the Centre, making up two full-time equivalent positions. There is a co-shared Co-Coordinator position, supported by an Administration Officer. Up until recently, there was also a Senior Community Educator, with extensive experience in adult and Indigenous education. Although a very small organization, it is a culturally diverse workplace. There are six women who identify with six cultural traditions, and speak seven languages at varying levels of proficiency.   The glue binding this group of women is a strong belief in, and commitment to, women's rights and empowerment at work, home and in the community.

As a service that provides industrial relations information, support and advice to NT women, they are also mandated to target services to women in disadvantaged bargaining positions and insecure and low paid employment. In the 2008-09 year, they provided services to 58% ESB women and 42% to women of CALD (20%) and Aboriginal (22%) backgrounds. Over the past few years, they have seen a steady increase in the number of CALD women attending the Centre for assistance. Through planning and judicious resourcing, they have been able to provide a more inclusive and accessible service to our target group. In their community education and client work, they have adopted the action-research methodology of action, critical reflection, feedback, and refining methods.

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[17] FECCA (2011) *Access and Equity Consultations 2010-2011*, FECCA: Canberra. See also Northern Territory Women's Working Centre website: <http://www.ntwwc.com.au/index.php/home>.

The services provided include:

- Workplace rights education to community groups and organisations including bi cultural delivery in collaboration with members of the cultural communities;
- Community education sessions using visible and tangible modes of training that address specific cultural preferences;
- Use of role plays and lived experience narratives in training;
- Supporting women at their own pace by embracing their own readiness to act or change;
- Using focus groups to identify unmet needs as well as ideas to address them;
- Ongoing evaluation

By adopting a structured and innovative approach to intercultural training and development, this service is a model for culturally sensitive provision of community education in CALD groups.

Health

The provision of accessible and equitable health services over the life-course has been identified as an issue for CALD communities. More specifically, CALD sensitive preventative care for new migrants and refugees, who often experience a decline in their health upon arrival, has been highlighted as a service provision gap[18]. For some CALD groups there is evidence of higher incidence of acute and chronic preventable diseases[19]. Providing support during the initial settlement period through a focus on preventative care is a fundamental way to safeguard against chronic conditions. A focus on information, the acquisition of health literacy and systems knowledge, and the provision of CALD sensitive services such as refugee health nurses is integral to this. This will not only help to promote informed consent but also allow new migrants and refugees greater capacity to participate and integrate into Australian society as healthy individuals and communities.

Case Study

Breast Care Awareness Project, NSW Refuge Health Service[20]

With the support of the Cancer Institute of NSW and BreastScreen NSW, the NSW Refugee Health Service established the Breast Care Awareness Project. This was aimed at increasing awareness of the importance of breast health and regular breast screening among Afghan, Assyrian, Chaldean, Iraqi and Mandaean women in south west and western Sydney.

The features of the program included:

- 8 information sessions run by health professionals. These were supported by ethno-specific and bilingual community workers and interpreters;
- The dissemination of information about causes, symptoms and treatment of breast cancer;
- Information provision on available free services;
- Promotion of key health messages in ethno-specific radio programs and newspapers;

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[18] Department of Health and Ageing (2010) *National Women's Health Policy 2010*, Australian Government: Canberra, p.93.
[19] National Preventative Health Taskforce (2008) *Australia: The Healthiest Country by 2020 Discussion Paper*, Australian Government: Canberra, p.10.
[20] FECCA (2011) *Access and Equity Consultations 2010-2011*, FECCA: Canberra. See also NSW Refugee Health Service website: <http://www.sswahs.nsw.gov.au/sswahs/refugee/>.

- An avenue to gauge the levels of existing knowledge;
- Space for participants to raise their concerns and questions about breast cancer;
- Opportunity to sign up for breast screening appointments at the information session; and
- The provision of 9 group breast screenings for women. These groups were accompanied by a community worker who assisted with transport, orientation and support during screenings.

This project demonstrated significant gaps in information provision and equitable access to services, including:

- The need for breast health information and screening options for CALD women in general. This was demonstrated by the attendance at information sessions, as while these were initially targeted at older women, they attracted women irrespective of age;
- Disparate understandings of breast cancer in the CALD community;
- Lack of information on available services;
- Need for CALD sensitive breast screen service provision;
- The importance of bilingual health workers; and
- The provision of adequate language support services for clients throughout the spectrum of health services.

The Breast Care program demonstrated an understanding of the specific needs of CALD women in the local area and provided accordingly. The implementation of similar programs across a range of health initiatives would benefit the overall health outcomes of new migrants and refugees, and would therefore assist in their full participation and integration into Australian society.

Employment

FECCA's 2011 Access and Equity Consultations and submission to Job Services Australia (JSA) January 2010 pinpointed the need for a CALD specific employment liaison officer to boost employment in the CALD community[21][22]. Whilst this was particularly evident in regional and rural areas, there is a widespread call for innovation in all CALD employment pathways. With a focus particularly on skills recognition and upskilling, this role would not only help integrate and benefit the CALD community, especially new and emerging communities, but enrich Australia's workplace diversity, local communities and, ultimately, its national economy. Stable employment is integral to facilitating social inclusion, participation, and integration into Australian society for new migrants and refugees.

Gaining sustainable, safe and equitably paid employment is difficult for many people in Australia. However, for new migrants and refugees there are significant and distinct barriers to employment. These barriers include intersectional disadvantage due to the following:

- Lack of cultural and linguistic awareness and sensitive in service provision;
- Lack of religious awareness and sensitivity;
- Non-transferable skills and accreditation procedures within Australian standards;
- Gender;
- Job Services Australia not attending adequately to the needs of marginalised and disadvantaged job seekers;
- Discrimination; and
- Different understandings of work place culture and rights.

To assist in relieving these barriers, government funding could be allocated to provide CALD specific employment liaison officers to settlement service providers or JSA providers in specific regions.

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[21] FECCA (2011) *Access and Equity Consultations 2010-2011*, FECCA: Canberra.
[22] FECCA (2011) *FECCA submission on Job Services Australia (JSA) and the provision of employment services*, FECCA: Canberra.

Case Study

Indigenous Employment Program, Mildura[23]

Funded through DEEWR since 2003, Mildura's Indigenous Program has had unprecedented success rates in the field of Indigenous employment. Of note, this program has resulted in increased employment rates for Indigenous people, particularly youth, greater community cohesion and trust, increased school attendance and cross generational change. In the period of one 12 month contract, the program achieved a 72 percent success rate in the placement of candidates employed for 15 months or more.

Directed and administered by a well known and respected elder of the local Aboriginal community, this program offers a grassroots approach to sustainable employment in local community. The features of this service include:

- Pre employment training, i.e. skill recognition, writing resumes, mock interviews;
- Job skills training;
- Mentoring support;
- Cross cultural training for both job seekers and prospective employees;
- Travel and uniform assistance;
- Financial incentives for employees to recruit jobseekers;
- Placement into suitable employment;
- High community profiling of success and achievements.

This is a remarkable program and there have been calls to transfer the model to the CALD sector. Although AMES already funds a similar program through the Skilled Migrant Mentoring Program, services that provide this have experienced the following shortcomings in the initiative:

- Focus on skilled migrants rather than provision to all CALD job seekers;
- Limited and unstable funding arrangements;
- Lack of incentives and support for employees to take on new migrants as employees;
- Overburdening, time poverty and lack of cross cultural employment expertise.

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[23] FECCA (2011) *Access and Equity Consultations 2010-2011*, FECCA: Canberra.

By transferring the Indigenous Employment Program model to the CALD sector, greater access and sensitivity would be afforded to new migrant jobseekers. In this move, however, consideration of whether the service would be ethno-specific or cater to the whole CALD community needs to be taken. Many settlement services require their workers to service all groups. FECCA envisages the introduction of the employment liaison officer position responding to the context of the service in terms of ethno specificity. This would boost employment locally and consequently have the effect of enriching the community and the local economy.

Case Study

Fitted for Work[24]

Nine months ago Melbourne University and Foundation House established Fitted for Work in response to a significant systems gap in the provision of employment pathways for women. It found that migrant and refugee women experience cross-sectional disadvantage based on CALD, gender and age discrimination.

Fitted for Work's core business is assisting migrant and refugee women in Melbourne and Parramatta in Sydney to get ready for work. The women who come through the program are from a broad range of backgrounds including childcare, finance and retail.

Fitted for Work facilitates employment through the following initiatives:

- Outfitting women for interviews
- Mentoring women through job processes
- Discussion on workplace culture

This program, though new, seems to be functioning very well. It is particularly helping many professionally trained women from migrant and refugee backgrounds, who are ready for work, find and maintain jobs.

Fitted for Work also has a research function that is focused on identifying the enablers and barriers to employment for CALD women in order to counteract underemployment.

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[24] FECCA (2011) *Access and Equity Consultations 2010-2011*, FECCA: Canberra. See also Fitted for Work website: < http://www.fittedforwork.org/ >.

The significant challenge to this service is finding enough mentors to respond to demand from clients. Government funding for services such as Fitted for Work would enable their broader implementation across Australia and, in turn, the greater participation and integration of new migrants and refugees in Australia.

Long Term Settlement

4. **Incentives to promote long term settlement patterns that achieve greater social and economic benefits for Australian society as a whole.**

The transition from settlement to life beyond the initial five years brings into focus the capacity of the architecture of Australian society to include and incorporate difference and diversity.

Settlement is a process that continues beyond a five year period and encompasses a person's life-course. Incentives for long term settlement in Australia must be established with this life-course approach catered for.

By fostering belonging, participation and contribution through and beyond the settlement period, long term settlement incentives have a greater capacity to benefit Australian society as a whole both socially and economically. These three values guide the following proposed incentives that FECCA has identified as good practice models.

Mainstream services have been identified by FECCA in collaboration with CALD community consultations as in need of diversification. They operate as a nexus between the community and government and it is essential that they integrate the needs of Australia's diverse population into their services.

Recognition of CALD Expertise

The contribution of CALD expertise has enriched a wide range of services in the provision of sensitive, respectful and effective service and interaction. Such essential services, which rely on CALD expertise and provide both social and economic growth to Australia, include health services and both domestic and international business.

Recognising this particular expertise through incentives is a way of valuing diversity and, at the same time, utilizing its productive capacity. A key issue for mainstream institutions is cultural competence. Providing a culturally competent service is a crucial step to improving the quality of support and care provided to CALD communities and, in particular, new migrants and refugees. Awareness of and sensitivity to cultural and linguistic difference is key in enabling service provision to support people and communities through the transition period and into long term settlement.

FECCA recommends:

17. That services recognise, value and respect cultural competency training and/or CALD expertise as a legitimate skill.
18. That staff undertake cultural competency training in order to promote better service throughthe elimination of discrimination.
19. That information provision is targeted, using outreach where necessary, and addresses cultural preferences. This will include building the capacity of Australian systems to communicate directly with communities in successful competition with overseas satellite sources of communication.
20. That information provision address the language diversity and range of English proficiency within new and emerging communities through translated materials, interpreters, and bilingual service workers. Information provision must incorporate different modes of information delivery so that all persons from new and emerging communities, regardless of their literacy, English proficiency, digital knowledge levels, cultural background, and/or level of comprehension of Western bureaucratic systems, are given an equal opportunity to access the information necessary for their full understanding of and participation in the wider Australian community.
21. That there is relevant service provision including building capacity of ethno specific service providers and community infrastructure through enhanced funding and government support.
22. That organisations undertake capacity building supporting skill requirements for employment, including workplace language courses, skills recognition and tackling discrimination.
23. That there is inclusion of CALD input into design, implementation and assessment of services

Enhancing volunteer opportunities[25]

Volunteering in multicultural and ethno-specific organisations has long been recognised as a way of enabling purposeful participation in and contribution to Australian society. It is crucial that multicultural policy and practice not only support this but also go beyond it, through mainstream implementation.

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[25] Contribution of Sydney Chinese Services Interagency, 2011.

Volunteering assists migrants and refugees to build skills, network, and acquire work experience in Australian employment. It provides a structured means for newly-arrived migrants to contribute and gain meaningful local work experience and contribute to their communities. It may also be effective in warding against isolation and inactivity, which is something many newly-arrived refugees and migrants face.

Volunteering opportunities also serve to create new cultural awareness in mainstream work environments and increase the cultural competency of employers.

FECCA recommends:

24. That volunteer opportunities be established through partnerships between settlement service programs and mainstream organisations. This would facilitate a connection with services and employment opportunities beyond the initial settlement period.

25. That all workplaces that recruit volunteers be provided with cultural competency training.

26. That in the implementation of volunteering strategies employers be ever mindful of the Occupational Health and Safety of their volunteers.

Facilitating greater access to self employment

In areas experiencing little to no employment options, there has been a call for self employment[26]. However, the current systems, processes and requirements that govern access to building small businesses are proving onerous, confusing and insensitive to CALD communities.

For example, the setting up of CALD family day care arrangements has exemplified the inaccessible and unequitable nature of current processes. Family day care offers CALD communities, and particularly CALD women, an opportunity to utilise their skills and resources to promote social interaction and CALD sensitive care. It also facilitates economic security for families whilst at the same time assisting their community with CALD sensitive affordable child care.

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[26] FECCA (2011) *Access and Equity Consultations 2010-2011*, FECCA: Canberra.

At present CALD communities wanting to establish a family day care within their own home face the following difficulties:

- Lack of systems knowledge, i.e. accessing appropriate grants and filling in the right paper work;
- The need for specialised training, such as a certificate in childcare, often disempowers women who already have significant experience in raising children and caring for other children in their community;
- Limited finances and resources;
- Lack of CALD sensitive support and information provision in this area.

Whilst FECCA acknowledges there is need for standardisation in services and the processes that govern them, we also advocate for equity and the acknowledgement of diversity of experience. Reforming the provision of grants and the process of application for small businesses to a more flexible and CALD sensitive model is the initial step to creating greater equity and maximising contribution in this arena.

A method of facilitating self employment is access to micro-credit. The following is an example of how micro-credit can help empower women to achieve self employment.

Case study

Micro-credit Loans, Lighthouse Business Innovation Centre[27]

Lighthouse Business Innovation Centre Limited is an ACT-based micro-credit program administrator funded through the Office of Women. The micro-credit program was established approximately a year ago with the aim of helping women on low incomes achieve economic equity and become entrepreneurs, whilst at the same time building confidence and resilience.

Although the program is for all women on low incomes, CALD women have been involved and the program organisers have facilitated outreach through dialogue with diverse communities.

The program involves the following:

- Intensive support around developing business ideas and plans

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[27] FECCA (2011) *Access and Equity Consultations 2010-2011*, FECCA: Canberra. See also Micro-credit Loans, Lighthouse Business Innovation Centre website: <http://www.brilliantidea.com.au/>.

- Application process for interest free loans (up to $3,000) to start/develop businesses
- No administration costs

One of the reasons this has been a successful program is its personalised nature and immediacy to the community. In particular, the program's connection with many successful micro-credit programs existing in countries at a grassroots level across the world offer a familiarity to many migrants and refugees, who are accustomed to this practice and may have utilised this opportunity in the past.

This program also provides women with opportunities which may not have been available to them previously. It enables them to pursue their interests, talents and goals whilst at the same time allowing them to profit financially from them. This ultimately contributes to diversifying Australian businesses and the market but also potentially adding to both the domestic and wider economy.

National Productive Capacity

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

There are strong critics on both sides of the argument about the economic benefits of multiculturalism. In this context, it is important not to conflate multiculturalism with immigration. Multiculturalism is focused on cultural management rather than immigration quotas, which are in most cases well beyond the control of individual nations in globalised business and politics.

FECCA's position in this debate has been to support family reunion and humanitarian intake as the core priorities of Australia's immigration policies. In doing so we recognise the following:

- The greatest benefit of multiculturalism is not always in measurable economic indicators. Many theorists of multiculturalism have criticised the economic argument for cultural diversity as an artificial and narrow one that discounts human elements and qualities.

- The importance of the family and community as the most stable units of society that offer support for creating belonging, participation and contribution by and for all Australians. We also recognise the need for a "critical mass" for any community to feel safe and settled in a new country.

- Engagement with difference also tends to make societies more ready to embrace differences within their own contexts, such as issues to do with sexuality and the like.

- Cross cultural interactions are often some of the richest spaces of innovation and transformation. It is where new discourses are created and new philosophies are forged. Consider the challenging discourses emerging from many non western academics working within the western system and combining the best of both worlds, such as Nobel Prize winner Amartya Sen and Islamic scholar Tariq Ramadan. Both Sen and Ramadan call for a profound re-examination of long held beliefs by exposing them to the "sunlight" of global scholarly traditions which have hitherto been excluded from the realm of mainstream western thought. If we need to change the very architecture of our society to adequately deal with multiculturalism, the answers

are going to come from these cross cultural spaces rather than from the old mono cultural fortresses.

In examining the benefits in this arena, we also need to embrace the capacity of our social structures to harness the maximum benefits of our cultural diversity. Thus in any measures of the economic benefits of migration, we also have to include the factors in their social context that either enhance or impede the economic progress of migrants.

FECCA draws attention to the following factors that affect productive capacity:

1. Linguistic skills

Like many cultures that have a tradition of a single dominant language, Australia has not fully engaged with the benefits and complexity of a multilingual society. The benefits of a multilingual society are both economic and cultural. Languages are essential manifestations of culture. In learning other languages we actively engage with intercultural dialogues by getting into the mind of a particular culture, so to speak. Australia's lack of understanding about the benefits of language acquisition leads to two consequences:

- We do not structure English language teaching to adequately address the links between language and culture.

- We do not have rigorous and strong models for supporting a multi lingual framework in our education or other systems.

Linguistic and cultural diversity in Australia provides key economic benefits including:

- The capacity to access overseas markets, networks and expertise through the diaspora. This helps develop Australian overseas markets and create new export markets for Australian goods. Australia has a number of cross border business councils which is evidence of the value of the diasporic connections and networks.

- Linguistic and cultural knowledge also benefits domestic multicultural markets.

In addition to the languages issues, there is an overarching gap in the need for greater intersection of workplace productive diversity and equity strategies. The link between these two narratives is absent and diversity strategies are often tokenistic and inadequately resourced. As a result of this:

- Many employers do not have structured workplace diversity strategies.

- Many migrants are underemployed or face barriers in their skills being recognised.

- FECCA's Access and Equity consultations show that there is active discrimination in some of the vocational and trade sectors, particularly in apprenticeship situations, where migrants are not recognised and promoted through the ranks.

In such contexts, we fall significantly short of harnessing the full benefits and skills of our diverse workforce. This context has to be kept in mind while discussing any of the current benefits of diversity, which can only be enhanced by a full and structured engagement of the skills of all Australians.

In sectors such as aged care, where there is a paucity of CALD workers with a range of linguistic skills, there is potential for recruiting workers from CALD communities. A workforce with linguistic and cultural capacities is also an asset for international businesses to set up bases for their regional headquarters.

Following are some examples of organisations and businesses harnessing the benefits of cultural and linguistic diversity.

Case Studies

FECCA and NPS

FECCA works with the NPS (formerly National Prescribing Service) to provide culture-specific knowledge that assists NPS in communicating with CALD communities in crucial areas such as safe medicine use. Such assistance derives from FECCA's knowledge of not only cultural organisations but cultural preferences for health information provision. Where information is not targeted and delivered in ways that enable access by CALD communities, it becomes irrelevant.

FECCA also supports the NPS CALD Think Tank, which is an advisory group providing input into CALD specific issues for health research and health promotion. To this end, FECCA and NPS work together to build the productive capacity of health services in Australia.

American Express

American Express has relocated its Asia Pacific headquarters to Australia to harness the high levels of Asian language skills available from native speakers who are migrants to Australia.

Gateway Pharmaceuticals (now defunct)

Gateway Pharmaceuticals developed links in Asia through chance information gleaned from one of its customers in Cabramatta. The store in Cabramatta had high sales of paracetamol. One of the local customers, who was of Vietnamese origin, informed them that local paracetamol was cheaper and of better quality than the ones produced in Vietnam and that people bought them in large quantities to be sent to Vietnam. This led to Gateway successfully developing export opportunities in Vietnam.

Innovative small business initiatives

Many migrants develop small business models in their initial stages of settlement in Australia. These businesses often focus on cultural products and services that are offered to their own cultural communities. In many culturally diverse suburbs such as Lakemba and Cabramatta, there are restaurants, bakeries, small supermarkets and other businesses that offer specialised services and goods.

Case Study

Bangladeshi Women's Group (Metro Migrant Resource Centre)

Formed in 2009, the Bangladeshi Women's Group is a program supported by the Metro Migrant Resource Centre. At present it consists of 12 women who are largely from Bangladeshi background. The women meet once a week to share, strengthen and acquire skills in areas such as catering, sewing and embroidery.

The program aims to combat the experience of isolation through improved social-connectedness, the sharing of knowledge, skill acquisition and the possibility of self employment opportunities. For example, the program has assisted the women to receive recognised qualifications in areas such as food handling. Coupled with support to acquire an ABN, this qualification then gives the women an opportunity to establish their own catering businesses.

The program has successfully assisted women to up skill, gain employment and connect with local women in a safe and friendly environment. Given this achievement, the program is now in the process of expanding to include women from other communities.

FECCA recommends:

27. That there is greater emphasis in productive diversity discourses on delivery of equity for all employees.

28. That there is recognition in such measures of the "quality of life" issues which are inherent in enhanced and equitable work conditions for all employees such as innovation and creativity.

29. That there is research and data developed in the area of productive diversity and ethnic entrepreneurship where there has been a gap for the last 10 years.

30. That systems and structures respond to new business models such as "cottage industry" model and microfinance initiatives in supportive ways.

31. That barriers to business initiatives be addressed including skills recognition and language and training issues.

Utilising The Skills of all Migrants

6. **The profile of skilled migration and the extent to which Australia is fully utilising the skills of all migrants**

7. **Potential government initiatives to better assist migrant communities establish business enterprises.**

There are, at any one time, almost a million people who are temporarily in Australia. As a nation we benefit from the contribution of these people who, in the case of temporary residence, can make a significant contribution to the economy as well as the social and cultural development of our nation. Given the significant size of the population in Australia on a temporary basis and the significant period of time temporary residence visas may allow, it is important that temporary residents are made welcome into the Australian community and are equipped to manage potential challenges. For example, it is important that new temporary residents have some awareness of the cultural expectations, social norms, legal and administrative frameworks and requirements which may impact on their choices, behaviours and ability to understand and navigate important systems while in Australia.

Building social inclusion and participation should include temporary residents, particularly as many bring with them and offer valuable skills capable of strengthening Australia's social and economic position. An Australian multicultural policy encouraging social harmony should be inclusive of temporary residents while they are in Australia.

Enabling migrants to establish their own businesses can also benefit Australian social and economically in the following ways

- Import replacement means that more "exotic" goods and services are produced locally creating market diversity

- Potential to create "incubator" spaces for migrants who could be supported to address gaps in products and services in Australia

- Potential to use small business as a way of creating employment to support rural and regional settlement initiatives

Currently, however, there are significant issues affecting skilled migrants in Australia, such as:

- Underemployment when they are unable to find work that is appropriate for their

skill levels. This can create situations of loss of confidence and self esteem.

- Lack of systems knowledge including the labour market requirements such as preparation of resumes and addressing selection criteria

FECCA recommends:

32. That there is provision to deliver orientation programs to temporary residents which include a component of cultural awareness, rights and responsibilities and systems knowledge education.

33. That processes of obtaining skilled migration visas be examined, including the content and parameters of the points test so that this does not disadvantage some cultures and communities.

34. That there are appropriate employment pathways for skilled migrants which support them in finding work that is at the right level and appropriate for their professional qualifications.

Case Study

New Enterprise Incentive Scheme (NEIS)

The New Enterprise Incentive Scheme is a program providing accredited small business training, business advice and mentoring, income support and, in some cases, rental assistance to eligible job seekers interested in starting and running a small business. While NEIS is not aimed specifically at migrants, it has nevertheless helped many migrants with strong English language skills to transition from unemployment or underemployment to steady employment, self-sufficiency, and a sense of belonging and contributing to their community and Australia overall.

Research into the NEIS program, carried out by DEEWR in 2008, found that CALD participants' average earnings in their businesses were not significantly different from the average at both the 3 and 16 month marks, and that CALD participants were more likely to be in self-employment and to have employed additional staff at the 16 month mark[28]. However, the study also found that CALD outcomes were less sustainable, with more CALD

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[28] Evaluation and Program Performance Branch (2008) *New Enterprise Incentive Scheme Longer-Term Outcomes*, DEEWR, pp,24,19

participants ultimately leaving self-employment than other participants, with a lower proportion of those leaving self-employment transitioning into other employment. It is therefore clear that the NEIS program is not entirely addressing the distinctive needs of CALD job seekers in Australia.

While the NEIS program provides a supportive avenue to entrepreneurship and self-employment for migrants with strong English language skills, it has come under criticism for failing to provide pathways for CALD participants with low English language and literacy skills. Lack of systems knowledge and cultural factors also play a part in limiting CALD involvement in NEIS, as does the lack of cultural competency in JSA and NEIS providers[29].

It is therefore clear that while NEIS has the potential to strongly support entrepreneurship for new and established migrants in Australia, and to thereby facilitate their participation and integration into Australian society, the program needs to be adapted and given the resources to accommodate Australia's cultural diversity. Providing interpreters and translators within the program for migrants with low English language skills, and training JSA and NEIS staff in cultural competence matters, could greatly improve the uptake and outcomes of NEIS for migrants.

FECCA recommends:

35. That the government support small business owners by removing complex and bureaucratic processes that act as a barrier for many migrant communities to start new enterprises

36. That these businesses, which are initially culture specific, are recognised as pathways to broader engagement with mainstream goods and services.

37. That small businesses in regional and rural settings are recognised and supported as a strong way forward in creating sustainable settlement in such regions, and also as catering to the cultural needs to new communities in these areas.

38. That structured environments are created with regards to flexibility and innovative ways to engage with new business models such as cottage industries.

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[29] Evaluation and Program Performance Branch (2008) *New Enterprise Incentive Scheme Longer-Term Outcomes*, DEEWR, pp,24,19

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