



Ethnic Communities Council of Queensland

ECCQ Policy Platform

Federal Election 2022

The Ethnic Communities Council of Queensland (ECCQ) is the Queensland peak body representing culturally and linguistically diverse communities. Through our vast membership we represent over 400 ethno-specific organisations, multicultural businesses, service providers and individuals.

Through consultation and listening exercises with our members and in solidarity with the Federation of Ethnic Communities Council of Australia (FECCA), ECCQ is calling for significant action towards:

1. [A Fair and Inclusive Society](#)
2. [Equitable Access and Outcomes from Government Services](#)
3. [Inclusive Policy and Practice Design](#)
4. [Access to Quality Health Care for All](#)
5. [Culturally Responsive Aged Care for All](#)
6. [Culturally Responsive Disability Services for All](#)



ECCQ Recommendations towards a fair and inclusive society

- a commitment to an informed and resourced national anti-racism strategy.
- The creation of a whole of government mechanism to overhaul the Australian migration program resulting in a fair, timely and transparent pathway to citizenship.

National Anti-racism Strategy

The opportunity for all to live free from racism and discrimination forms the basis of a fair and inclusive society that encourages full participation from its members. Racism continues to be a problem in Australia and impacts on people's wellbeing, sense of belonging, and their connection to society.

The Australian Human Rights Commission has launched a plan to develop a National Anti-Racism Framework but has not been adequately resourced to complete this task in true partnership with people who experience racism. ECCQ calls for a strategy that is grounded in the experience and knowledge of people who experience racism in Australia including First Nations people. It must be well-resourced to ensure it can be designed and implemented in partnership with people and communities who experience racism.

Fair, Timely and Transparent Pathway to Citizenship

A pathway to permanent residency allows people who migrate to Australia certainty for themselves, their families, and their future. This certainty helps people develop a sense of belonging and allows people to call Australia home and plan their future. In Australia, permanent residency and citizenship have been used as a means of nation building and fostering inclusivity to create our multicultural Australia, where diverse cultures and languages are celebrated and embraced.

There have been numerous public enquiries in recent years documenting the inefficiencies, inconsistencies and unfairness of the Australian migration programs such as '[Select Committee into Temporary Migration Report 2021](#)', and '[Report of the Inquiry into Australia's Skilled Migration Program 2021](#)'. Recommendations from these public enquiries must be used to overhaul the migration program, laws, regulations, and policies across departments and restoring the alignment between temporary and permanent migration.

This overhaul will result in a fairer, more transparent, and timely pathway to citizenship so everyone is free to participate and belong equally.



ECCQ Recommendations for equitable access and outcomes from government services

1. Implement a revised Multicultural Access and Equity Policy Framework that is strong, transparent and includes mandated reporting and data collection from all departments and agencies

A revised Multicultural Access and Equity Policy Framework

When all people can equitably access government programs and services Australia will be closer to a genuinely inclusive society. This includes identifying and removing barriers to participation and contribution for everyone irrespective of their cultural, ethnic, religious, or linguistic background. The federal Multicultural Access and Equity Policy is a key mechanism to achieving these goals, but it currently has a limited impact.

There has been a notable decrease in the commitment to multicultural access and equity across government departments, however the COVID-19 pandemic also highlighted major gaps in communication and engagement with Australia's multicultural communities.

In 2020, FECCA released its latest [Multicultural Access and Equity Report](#). Based on community voices, the report demonstrated that numerous barriers still exist for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in accessing government services, including:

- lack of information in plain English
- lack of accessible information in languages other than English
- increases in online and limited face to face service provision
- limited awareness and use of the national Translation and Interpreting Service (TIS) and other interpreting and translating services
- limited cultural competency among front-line staff.

ECCQ calls for a renewed commitment to a strong and transparent multicultural Access and Equity Policy developed through co-design and genuine consultation with culturally diverse communities in Australia. This policy must be implemented across all government departments and agencies. A strong policy must include intersectionality as a core principle of policy development and accountability measure to ensure commitment and action.



ECCQ Recommendation for inclusive policy and practice design

1. Boost funding for multicultural community organisations to ensure the voices of culturally and linguistically diverse people are meaningfully included in policy and practice design.
2. Establish a National Working Group on culturally and linguistically diverse data collection.

Ensure The Voices of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse People are Included in Policy Design

Co-design and genuine consultation with multicultural communities from the very beginning is the only way to create inclusive policy and practice. However, given the vastness Australia's culturally diverse communities it is equally important to invest in existing multicultural and ethno-specific organisations. These organisations are built on trust, have wide networks and a deep understanding of culture. During the COVID-19 pandemic, these organisations were crucial in facilitating engagement between communities and government.

ECCQ is calling for policies and practices to be designed in partnership with ethno-specific organisations and their communities. We believe that this will lead to more equitable access to the services and programs that all people in Australia need to participate fully in society.

National Working Group on Data Collection Capturing Cultural and Linguistic Diversity

To ensure research and evidence reflects Australia's cultural diversity, FECCA calls for the establishment and resourcing of a National Working Group to develop consistent and accurate measures of cultural, ethnic and linguistic diversity to achieve adequate, appropriate, accessible and useful data collection.

These measures must:

- ensure the inclusion of culturally, ethnically, and linguistically diverse populations
- be mandated and used by all Commonwealth and State/Territory Government departments and agencies
- allow research funding bodies to develop mechanisms to ensure federally funded research demonstrates inclusive and representative research methodology.



ECCQ Recommendations for access to quality healthcare for all

- Funding culturally appropriate and tailored preventative health care services to ensure the care needs of all health consumers including the specific health needs of CALD health consumers are met
- Improving health system responsiveness through embedding cultural competence in all levels of health service, including at operational, administrative, practitioner, and during training.
- Providing mechanism for continued and concerted efforts across agencies to improve the underlying socioeconomic determinants of health for CALD people.

Access to Quality Healthcare

Access to quality healthcare is a fundamental human right and essential to the lives of people and their families. A successful multicultural Australia must ensure everyone in Australia has access to appropriate, quality, and safe health care regardless of their cultural, linguistic, ethnic, or religious background. In the context of Australia's increasing diversity and COVID-19, access to appropriate, quality, and safe health care is more important than ever to ensure individuals can actively take part in communities as part of a fair and inclusive society.

The prevalence of chronic disease in culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities is unreasonably high compared with the general population. In recent years there has been extensive exploration of health outcomes for culturally diverse communities in Australia, such as "People from South-East Asia, North Africa, the Middle East, Oceania (excl. Australia), and Southern and Eastern Europe have higher rates of developing diabetes than other Australians." (p9, Australian National Diabetes Strategy 2016-2020, Commonwealth of Australia, 2015), "People of Middle Eastern origin have a 15% higher hospitalization rate for coronary heart disease." (Chief Health Officer Report, Queensland Health, 2014), and "CALD Australians with lung cancer face poorer survival rates and are less likely to receive timely and appropriate care." (Mazza et al., 2018)

An exacerbator of poor health outcomes is equitable access health services, as such usage of health services among diverse communities is lower than expected. Culturally responsive, accessible and inclusive health services will in turn enable better health outcomes for Australia's culturally diverse communities.



ECCQ Recommendations for Culturally Responsive Aged Care for All

- Develop a multicultural-specific aged care navigator service based on full evaluation of the EnCOMPASS program within the Care Finder model, and support and sustain it with core funding.

Access to culturally responsive aged care

Approximately 1 in 3 Australians aged 65 and over were born in non-English speaking countries, and this number is expected to grow. While 1 in 3 older Australians were born in non-English speaking countries, they remain under-represented in their use of aged care services. Culturally and linguistically diverse older people make up approximately 28% of the Australian population requiring aged care*. However, the take up rate of aged care services, particularly home care, is lower for culturally diverse communities than for the general population in Australia and does not accurately reflect the number of CALD seniors that are requiring services.

There are currently three EnCOMPASS providers in Queensland, Inala Community House, Islamic Women's Association and World Wellness Group. All are based in south east Queensland and service Brisbane North, Brisbane South and Logan areas. Queensland is a large and diverse state with culturally diverse older people living in major centre, regionally and rurally. The current EnCOMPASS provision is not accessible for all Queenslanders.

Support for aged care navigation

In 2019, the need for an aged care navigation program tailored for cultural and linguistic diversity was recognised by an election promise of \$10 million to deliver such a program. In 2021 FECCA was funded to deliver the EnCOMPASS: Multicultural Aged Care Connector program for 18 months to December 2022 in partnership with 22 local organisations.

At the same time, the Final Report of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety recommended the establishment of the Care Finder aged care navigation program. Care Finder will begin in January 2023 and will be commissioned by the Primary Health Networks.

Within these timelines less than 12 months of data from the EnCOMPASS program can be incorporated into the Care Finder program before it begins operations in 2023. This means there will be limited insights on navigation needs of multicultural communities shaping the design of the Care Finder program. Without tailored navigation, older people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds will have less opportunities to access aged care services reducing their ability to lead dignified, healthy and fulfilling lives as they age.

In solidarity with FECCA, ECCQ calls for commitment and further resourcing to ensure the Care Finder program fully incorporates the learning and resources developed from the EnCOMPASS program. To ensure its success, the Care Finder program must be adequately resourced to meet the needs not only of the individuals using the system but also their families and communities.

*source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016 Census



ECCQ recommendations for culturally responsive disability services for all

- Develop and implement action plans to support the realisation of NDIS Cultural and Linguistic Diversity Strategy
- Provide culturally responsive support for systems navigation from seeking and accessing information to receiving and evaluating support

Barriers to Culturally Responsive Disability Support

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability (CRPD) prescribes that people with disability shall have the same rights as others to participate in all aspects of community life fully and effectively. However, there are still barriers for people in Australia with disabilities to enact these rights, and those with culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds experience additional barriers.

There is a significant discrepancy between the 2016 Census data and NDIS participants regarding the percentage of CALD population is irrefutable evidence of the layered difficulties for CALD communities to access the important right. Moreover, a person with disability born in Australia, whose parents are of CALD backgrounds, may not be considered a CALD person for NDIS purposes. This has profound implication on culturally responsive disability support as the family's cultural and religious beliefs often influence inclusion and exclusion of their children with disability from social and community lives.

The underrepresentation of CALD communities in NDIS and the challenge in identifying CALD individuals indicate that CALD perspective is not adequately reflected in the design and implementation of NDIS. Therefore, it is recommended that CALD communities and multicultural peak bodies are involved in developing and implementing action plans to realise Cultural and Linguistic Diversity Strategy of NDIS.

Multicultural Disability Systems Navigation

The input from CALD communities, including the National Community Connector Program delivered by FECCA in partnership with the National Ethnic Disability Alliance (NEDA), suggested that CALD people with disability have difficulties in accessing information and receiving supports in timely and equitable manners.

Culturally responsive systems navigation will ensure that CALD communities have equitable access to disability support. It also builds and improves CALD communities' trust in the support system, which in turn contributes back to the equitable services for all.