

ECCV Position Paper on Aged Care

Government Framework

1. ECCV acknowledges the Home and Community Care (HACC) diversity planning and practice framework of the Victorian Government and the National Ageing and Aged Care Strategy for People from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds.

Seniors

2. ECCV highlights that almost a third of the Victorian population aged 65 and over are from a non-English speaking background.
3. Seniors from a non-English speaking background have a preference to stay living at home longer, therefore, ECCV welcomes the Federal Government's aged care reform agenda to significantly expand home care.
4. ECCV is aware the seniors from a non-English speaking background are diverse in culture, language, spiritual beliefs and migration experiences and it is important that aged care services respond to that diversity.
5. ECCV notes that seniors from a non-English speaking background often find themselves isolated at home, have an increased risk of poverty, and have lower rates of internet usage.
6. ECCV emphasises that easy access to health and aged care services that meet the cultural, linguistic, and spiritual preferences of seniors from a non-English speaking background needs to be improved.
7. ECCV notes that seniors from a non-English speaking background living in regional and rural Victoria and older people with a refugee experience are likely to encounter additional barriers to access services.
8. The ECCV is concerned that seniors from non-English speaking background in receipt of the pension find the private rental market is both an unaffordable and unavailable accommodation option given their limited income.
9. ECCV highlights that seniors from a non-English speaking background often revert to their mother tongue when ageing and therefore aged care services need to provide interpreting services.

Culturally appropriate care

10. ECCV highlights that culturally appropriate care consist of the following elements particularly:
 - Same language services
 - Cultural and spiritual care

- Partnerships with ethno-specific and faith-based organisations
 - Employment of bilingual staff
 - Culturally specific dementia and palliative care
 - Culturally sensitive aged care assessment
 - Culturally appropriate food.
11. The ECCV notes that seniors from a non-English speaking background often prefer ethno-specific and/or multicultural services given that such services provide culturally and linguistically appropriate services. Ethno-specific and multicultural agencies are Australian community organisations providing specialist and critical services that complement the range of generic services available to the Victorian seniors community.
12. ECCV acknowledges the work of the ECCV Aged Care Policy Subcommittee in communicating with the ethno-specific and multicultural aged care sector on relevant developments and policies in aged care and building the capacity of the multicultural community aged care sector.

Key Recommendations

13. ECCV emphasises that multicultural seniors benefit from ethno-specific Planned Activity Groups, Friendly Visiting programs, Access and Support, HACC Language Services Credit Line, and related policy advocacy. ECCV therefore believes it is important that the multicultural aged care sector continues to receive funding for those programs after the Commonwealth takes over full responsibility of the Victorian HACC program in July 2015.
14. ECCV advocates that health and aged care services are designed to better meet the culturally, linguistically, and spiritually diverse preferences and rights of older Victorians from a non-English speaking background.
15. ECCV recommends including new and emerging communities and smaller multicultural communities in the Government's aged care planning process.
16. ECCV recommends the establishment of genuine partnerships amongst:
- Ethnic and multicultural communities
 - Ethno-specific, multicultural and generic service providers
 - Generic service providers and multicultural communities.
17. ECCV advocates strengthening the provision of ethno-specific and multicultural services to ensure better access of seniors from a non-English speaking background to health and aged care services.
18. ECCV recommends that a United Nations Convention on protecting the rights of older people includes the rights and preferences of older migrant populations.

Endorsed by the ECCV Board – March 2014