



**ethnic  
communities'  
council of  
victoria**

**Patron**

The Right Hon Malcolm Fraser  
AC, CH, former Prime Minister of  
Australia

## ECCV

### Submission to inform the development of the Second Action Plan under the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-22

March 2014

Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria (ECCV) is a peak advocacy peak body that represents over 200 Victorian ethnic and multicultural organisations.

ECCV welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to inform the development of the Second Action Plan under the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-22.

1. ECCV fully endorses the submission made by the Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA), the national peak body representing Australians from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds. As such, this submission is supplementary to the FECCA submission.

Response to question one: 'what have been the achievements/gaps und the First Action Plan?

2. As noted by FECCA, the establishment of the 1800RESPECT telephone counselling line is a successful outcome of the First Action Plan.

3. ECCV believes that the 1800RESPECT line is an important step towards encouraging women to speak out about their experiences and to seek assistance, as well as ensuring that they receive timely, accessible and appropriate support.

4. It would be beneficial, however, to review the accessibility of this service for CALD women. While the telephone service is complemented by an interpreter service (TIS National); the website for the service is in English and it will be a challenge for CALD women to know that an interpreter is available if required. A simple measure to overcome this would be to have the interpreter symbol on the home page, so that there is a visual prompt that this service can be accessed in any language.

5. Keeping a record of the number of women who utilise the services of an interpreter would also be a simple way to monitor whether women with low English proficiency are accessing the service; and if not further promotional activities could then be considered to engage this cohort.

#### **Recommendation one**

ECCV recommends that the 1800RESPECT service records the number of women accessing interpreters via the service and raise awareness that the service is accessible for women with low English proficiency.

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Response to question five: 'Which vulnerable groups and communities would benefit from an increased focus under the Second Action Plan?'

6. The ECCV would like it to be noted that violence is not more endemic, or profound in CALD communities, rather there are access and equity issues and additional measures that need to be considered, in order to better engage CALD women and their children who experience violence.

7. Prevention, intervention and response strategies may need to overcome additional barriers in order to reach women in CALD communities. These barriers vary from woman to woman and from community to community, with different women being affected in different ways and to varying degrees by factors such as:

- Language barriers.
- Unfamiliarity with support services and being unsure how to access these.
- Lacking awareness with regard to legal rights and options as they pertain to violence.
- Culturally unresponsive support services.
- Distrust of authorities, due to negative experiences in country of origin and in Australia.
- Discrimination.
- Pre arrival experiences and possible trauma.
- Reduced networks of support due to migration.
- Settlement demands, such as the priority of finding housing, work, schooling for children and connecting with a new community.

8. Women's experiences vary depending on the length of time they have been in Australia, their age and their particular circumstances. That said, all of the above needs to be considered in order to create a Second Action Plan that will support CALD women and their children, including women on temporary and secondary visas and women with low English proficiency.

9. ECCV reiterates that there needs to be an increased focus on vulnerable CALD women and their children in order to overcome existing barriers to accessing family violence services.

**Recommendation two**

ECCV recommends that the Second National Action Plan strategically targets vulnerable CALD women and their children in order to overcome existing barriers to accessing family violence services.

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