



**ethnic
communities'
council of
victoria**

Patron

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

**ECCV Submission
to the
Foundation on Violence against Women and
their children (the Foundation) national
consultation**

20 September 2013

Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria (ECCV) applauds the new Foundation for conducting a community consultation and seeking ideas to shape its effectiveness in driving some much-needed change to stop violence against women and their children from happening in the first place.

ECCV points out that whilst there is no indication that violence is any more endemic, or profound in CALD communities, there is a need for better support and access to services for women from CALD (culturally diverse backgrounds (CALD) and their children who experience violence.

ECCV is pleased to provide input to the online questionnaire that is part of the consultation process. The following is a transcript of the online submission made by ECCV to the Foundation.

1. Please indicate the type of organisation you are from.

Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria (ECCV) is a peak advocacy organisation that represents Victoria's multicultural community.

2. What approaches work well in the prevention of violence against women and their children? Please list up to 3 examples

- a. Media campaign for CALD (culturally and linguistically diverse) communities
- b. Increase cultural competence training of staff in service providers
- c. Community education targeted at specific ethnic communities, families for CALD backgrounds and multi-faith

2. Please outline the reasons why you consider these approaches to be effective?

There is an over-representation of women from CALD backgrounds access in crisis services. Women are not encountering services that are sufficiently culturally and linguistically appropriate. That results in increased numbers of CALD women, as compared with other Australian women, returning to those who have perpetrated violence against them.

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Women from CALD backgrounds experience various barriers to accessing services that 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.

Many women for CALD backgrounds go to their faith leaders, ethnic agencies and multicultural family services as a first point of contact. Faith leaders and ethnic agencies can be overwhelmed with families in crisis and need adequate education and support on how to identify family violence and how to make appropriate referrals. Whilst multicultural family services agencies high appropriate levels of cultural competency, they require adequate resources as additional time and languages services are required when dealing with people from non-English speaking backgrounds.

4. What does not work well in the prevention of violence against women and their children?

Services that are not culturally responsive, or that do not work with culturally diverse women's and family support services do not provide adequate support for women and families from CALD backgrounds.

5. In your view what will successful engagement of the Foundation with the community look like?

For successful cultural diversity engagement, the Foundation should establish a CALD Advisory Reference Group with the ethnic and multicultural community representation.

The Foundation also has an important role to play in conducting and sponsoring research into CALD communities and families that experience violence against women and children as well as their perceptions to family violence and support services.

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6. What opportunities are there in the next few years for the Foundation?

The Foundation has the opportunity to evaluate best practice support and prevention models in Australia overseas that focus on cultural diversity.

The Foundation has the opportunity to provide a strategic overview in a currently fragmented and under-resources system.

The Foundation should initiate pilot support and prevention programs targeted at CALD families and communities that provide innovative strategies.

The Foundation should engage with the ethnic sector from the outset of its establishment to ensure effective consultation in this special needs area of cultural diversity.

ECCV community consultation through its Women's Policy Sub-committee identified the following gaps and needs:

- Lack of data
- Lack of research
- Lack of strategic work
- Importance of reaching CALD women early and through relationships of trust via multicultural child care groups
- Build on the *Futures without Violence*, anew US international centre for family violence prevention.

The ECCV Women's Policy Sub-committee has produced a list of 'what needs to be done' to improve the primary prevention of violence against women from migrant and refugee backgrounds, and their children. ECCV believes that the Foundation has the opportunity to progress those issues through facilitating the redirection of resources, providing strategic coordination and initiating related pilot projects in the following areas:

- Media campaign for CALD communities - targeted at specific language groups through ethnic media and community radio that is customised for specific CALD communities
- Research project to get more evidence from CALD communities around attitudes and perceptions
- Build on overseas experience in domestic violence that is relevant to local CALD communities
- Educate men, younger men from CALD backgrounds
- Increase cultural competence training in family services
- Need to address gender inequality issues in CALD communities

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- Community education should be targeted at specific ethnic communities
- Translation of community resources and information sheets for example the "Enough Campaign" was translated into 10 different community languages via In Touch
- Need to engage multifaith community leaders
- Build on existing best practice example multi-faith community resources

7. What individuals, organisations and communities will it be important for the Foundation to engage and collaborate with, and why, including for philanthropic purposes?

Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria (ECCV) currently convenes a Women's Sub-Committee that receives advice from ethnic and multicultural community stakeholders on issues pertaining to the prevention of violence against women and their children. The Foundation has the opportunity to include ECCV on a CALD Advisory / Reference Group as a key Victorian coordinating advocacy body.

8. It would help us to understand your responses if we know who you are and your organisation. Please add details below if you wish.

Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria
Dr Irene Bouzo, Senior Policy Officer email ibouzo@eccv.org.au
Rachel Vanstone, Policy Officer email rvanstone@eccv.org.au
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9. Would you be willing to discuss your ideas with WestWood Spice or someone from the Foundation?

Yes ECCV welcomes the opportunity for further consultations.

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