



**ethnic
communities'
council of
victoria**

Strengthening Multicultural Victoria

ECCV 2006 Victorian State Election Platform

Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria Inc.
Statewide Resources Centre
150 Palmerston Street, Carlton VIC 3053
T 03 9349 4122 F 03 9349 4967



Table of Contents

Foreword.....	1
Executive Summary	2
1. Multicultural Aged Care Strategy.....	3
2. Language Services Policy	4
3. New and Emerging Communities	5
4. Community Harmony	7
5. Multicultural Policing Strategy	8
6. Multicultural Women's Strategy.....	9
7. Multicultural Youth Policy	10
8. Regional Multicultural Policy	11
9. CALD Alcohol and Drugs Issues	13
10. CALD Disability Policy.....	14
11. CALD Mental Health Policy.....	15
12. Arts and Culture	16
13. Diversity in Government.....	17



Foreword

This November 25, Victoria votes for its next State Government until 2010. Victoria is Australia's most multicultural state, with around 20% of Victorians speaking a language other than English at home, and 43.5% of Victorians either born overseas or having one or more parents born overseas. As such, political parties and candidates battling for votes in the 2006 State Election need to pay particular attention to the concerns of Victoria's multicultural communities.

Candidates and political parties with decent multicultural policies stand to gain much support from Victoria's culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities and other Victorians who support multiculturalism. In a recent 2006 survey two-thirds of Victorians said they believe immigrants have a positive influence on our society. With bipartisan political leadership on all sides of politics over the last decade, Victoria has established itself as the home of multiculturalism. But more work needs to be done!

While the introduction of the *Multicultural Victoria Act 2004* and the *Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001* have been crucial in consolidating the symbolic and overarching status of Victoria as a multicultural and harmonious community, more effort is needed around systemic service delivery issues like access to aged care services and decent interpreter funding.

Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria is the statewide, peak advocacy body representing multicultural communities in Victoria. Active since 1974, ECCV advocates for diverse, multicultural communities in areas like equal access to services, community harmony, and migration and settlement policy. ECCV opposes racism and racial and religious discrimination.

As part of its advocacy and policy role, ECCV presents its *Strengthening Multicultural Victoria 2006* Policy Platform for consideration by political parties and candidates in the lead up to the Victorian State Election. The ECCV Policy Platform calls for significant initiatives in areas like aged care, language services, new and emerging communities and CALD women's policy. While we have highlighted particular areas requiring policy attention, all areas of government policy and service delivery should be constantly scrutinised to ensure a culturally competent approach is in place. The suggested funding for initiatives is indicative only.

We hope that political candidates and parties take note of ECCV's Policy Platform as they finalise and release their policies before November 25. ECCV will be carefully scrutinising all policies upon release to ensure they address the needs of Victoria's culturally and linguistically diverse populations.

ECCV commends this policy platform to all Victorians and looks forward to working with the next Government of Victoria to strengthen Victorian multiculturalism into the future.

Yours sincerely

Phong Nguyen
Chairperson
Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria

Peter van Vliet
Executive Officer
Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria



Executive Summary

Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria, as the peak body for Victoria's multicultural communities, recommends its 2006 Victorian State Election Platform for consideration and adoption by Victorian political parties in the lead up to the November 2006 election.

Key features of the *Strengthening Multicultural Victoria* policy platform are as follows:

- **Aged Care:** greater funding of ethno-specific agencies; greater client choice in home and community care; more culturally responsive state public sector residential aged care facilities; and more CALD involvement in seniors' healthy and active living programs.
- **Language Services:** significantly increased interpreter funding in hospitals; further interpreter scholarship funding for women interpreters and regional interpreters.
- **New and Emerging Communities:** more family support programs; greater awareness raising about new and emerging communities; strategies to address new migrant 'culture shock'; targeted health, education, youth and community capacity building programs.
- **Community Harmony:** ongoing support for the *Multicultural Victoria Act 2004* and *Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001*; support for multicultural policy work and multicultural groups.
- **Multicultural Policing:** support for a Multicultural Policing Strategy including staff cultural awareness training, staff recruitment policies, and further community relationship building initiatives.
- **CALD Women:** support for a Multicultural Women's Strategy including: the full, public release of the CALD women's project; targeted domestic violence and sexual assault programs; and CALD women's interpreter, health, and isolation initiatives.
- **Multicultural Youth:** more targeted educational initiatives for CALD youth; standard discounted rates for after hours ethnic schools; and targeted drug and alcohol prevention and sexual health programs.
- **CALD Regional Policy:** continuation of the Victorian skilled migration strategy; greater funding of regional ethnic communities' councils; better regional language services; and more regional multicultural arts initiatives.
- **CALD Alcohol and Other Drugs Policy:** funding for a full-time drugs and policy officer within an appropriate multicultural agency to provide research, education and information services in that area.
- **CALD Disability and Mental Health Policy:** greater funding and policy work around targeted culturally competent care; and greater funding of ethnic communities to access these services.
- **Multicultural Arts and Culture:** significantly increased multicultural arts funding; development of a high-level multicultural arts strategy within Arts Victoria; and more support for Multicultural Arts Victoria (MAV).
- **Diversity in Government:** development of a diversity management strategy for increased productive diversity and cultural competence within the Victorian Public Service.



1. Multicultural Aged Care Strategy

By 2011, 38% of Melbourne's seniors will be from CALD backgrounds as our post-war migrants enter their senior years. With these significant numbers, delivering culturally competent aged care services has never been more important. It is imperative that the next State Government commits to a comprehensive **Multicultural Aged Care Strategy** involving all aspects of State Government aged care and seniors programs.

A **Multicultural Aged Care Strategy** would:

1. Improve the quality of care and support for CALD seniors and their carers.
2. Strengthen the capacity and funding of ethno-specific service providers in Home and Community Care (HACC) where their communities are large enough to warrant such services, so that they may provide basic services as is occurring in Commonwealth funded residential aged care.
3. Provide more client choice in HACC services so users may choose between different providers, as is the case with Commonwealth residential aged care services.
4. Streamline and strengthen culturally appropriate service responses in HACC by combining and extending the Culturally Equitable Gateways Strategy (CEGS) and HACC Cultural Planning Framework into a combined strategy with ongoing recurrent funding (beyond June 2007 when current CEGS funding expires).
5. Increase HACC social support funding by a further 10% to cater for unmet demand.
6. Make Victorian State Public Sector Residential Aged Care services more culturally responsive.
7. Increase positive ageing campaigns aimed at CALD seniors, including funding ethnic seniors' citizens clubs to run healthy and active living programs.
8. Give CALD elder abuse prevention more policy attention.
9. Support the undertaking of more research into CALD seniors and their needs.

Estimated Budget

Initiative	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	TOTAL
Multicultural Aged-Care Strategy*	\$3m	\$3m	\$3m	\$3m	\$12m

** Many of these initiatives are cost-neutral as they involve refocusing existing expenditure.*

A **Multicultural Aged Care Strategy** is a core policy objective of the Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria. For further details on our Multicultural Aged Care Strategy please visit the following URL address:

<http://eccv.org.au/doc/MACS.pdf>



2. Language Services Policy

Providing decent language services for newly arrived migrants, particularly humanitarian entrants with low level English proficiency, is critical in helping people build their new lives in Victoria. Older established communities also need decent language services as many older people from a non-English speaking background revert to their first language. If we are to take our obligations seriously under the *Multicultural Victoria Act 2004* we must provide all citizens with equal access to Victorian Government services. Getting language services provision right is a key component of providing equal access to government services.

The Victorian Government has in place good protocols for language services, as found in the *Language Services Guide* (2003), and the various departmental guides such as the Department of Human Services *Language Services Policy* (2005) and the Department of Justice's *Language Services Policy Guidelines* (2006). More recently the Government has also rolled out the Interpreter Symbol and Card, an initiative that ECCV has proudly supported. Importantly, the Victorian Office of Multicultural Affairs (VOMA) has also funded interpreter scholarships for new and emerging languages, particularly from Africa and the Middle East. While policy initiatives in language services for new and emerging communities are welcomed, attention also needs to focus on language services for older established communities.

Despite the worthwhile initiatives outlined above, there remains a significant lack of funding for on the ground interpreters, particularly in health settings. Hospitals in areas with significant CALD populations in metropolitan Melbourne have insufficient funding for interpreter services and are drawing down on already stretched general hospital budgets to meet their language services obligations.

Language Services Policy Recommendations:

1. DHS should significantly increase funding for interpreter services particularly in large hospitals in areas with large CALD populations.
2. The provision of language services in Victorian Government aged care services should be strengthened through targeted policy initiatives in this area.
3. The Victorian Government should continue funding interpreter training, with a further focus on training women and people in regional areas as interpreters to cater for the unmet needs of these groups.
4. The Victorian Government should develop strategies to increase the provision of language services in regional areas by offering scholarships to bilingual persons from new and emerging communities in those areas.

Estimated Budget

Initiative	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	TOTAL
Language Services Increased Interpreter Funding	\$5m	\$5m	\$5m	\$5m	\$20m



3. New and Emerging Communities

Somewhere around 100,000 Victorians belong to new and emerging communities, particularly those born in North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East. People from new and emerging communities may come from countries such as Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia, Ethiopia, Iraq, Burma and Afghanistan. Around two-thirds of Victoria's humanitarian intake is now from Africa.

Many new and emerging communities have significant cultural and language differences which present challenges in their successful transition to their new lives in Victoria. These challenges are in many ways more complex than those of traditional post-war European migrants as there are sometimes no common cultural references in Australia for migrants from these communities. As such it is critical that the Victorian Government continues to develop specific policies to address the needs of new and emerging communities in areas like employment, education and training, health, culture, and language and settlement services.

The Victorian based *Africa Think Tank* recently conducted a workshop for members of African communities which helped crystallise policy issues for new and emerging communities from Africa. Some of that work is reflected in these recommendations (including recommendation 1).

New and Emerging Communities Policy Recommendations:

1. The Victorian Government should fund research, education and policy work into the cultural practices of new and emerging communities, particularly in regard to family practices and values. This work should assist in strengthening positive family values, but also identify and develop sensitive policy responses to any practices that might be inconsistent with widely accepted notions of family relationships and non-discrimination within Australian society.
2. As a key part of this strategy, the Victorian Government should fund research education and policy work around new and emerging communities and the role of women in Australian society. Such a strategy should also focus on providing sensitive education programs to any communities whose views on the role of women in society is inconsistent with accepted non-discrimination and equal opportunity values within Australian society.
3. Equally, the Victorian Government should better educate the broader Victorian community about the culture and values of new and emerging communities, particularly from Africa and the Middle-East, to encourage cross-cultural understanding and acceptance.
4. The Victorian Government should work with Federal and Local Government to develop strategies to address and minimise 'culture shock' for newly arrived migrants, particularly migrants from non-English speaking African and Asian countries.
5. The Victorian Government should continue to fund and develop health policies and research aimed at members of new and emerging communities, including:
 - health education around health problems like communicable diseases, diet and lifestyle issues, and Vitamin D deficiency;



- the relationship between migration and mental health, including mental health strategies for immigrants fleeing from trauma and/or torture.
6. The Victorian Government should develop further specialist programs for children from new and emerging communities and fund specialist educational programs such as early start home based learning assistance. The Government should ensure that recently arrive immigrants are provided with adequate and timely information regarding the Victorian education system in community based languages. The Government should consider trialling the Yachud Accelerated Education Learning Project, which has already been trialled to target educational disadvantage among Indigenous Victorians, for disadvantaged children from new and emerging communities. The Government should ensure there are adequate teachers and teachers aides from new and emerging communities in schools with large new and emerging community student populations.
 7. The Victorian Government should develop further policies around youth groups from new and emerging communities, including developing mentoring strategies that also identify positive adult role models in particular communities and developing positive interactions with local community services such as local police.
 8. The Victorian Government should continue work on reducing the amount of time it takes to recognise overseas qualifications.
 9. The Victorian Government should provide further assistance in developing the capacity of community organisations from new and emerging communities and assisting in the identification and promotion of business opportunities and skills within these communities.

Estimated Budget

Initiative	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	TOTAL
New and Emerging Communities Initiatives	\$1m	\$1m	\$1m	\$1m	\$4m



4. Community Harmony

Victoria is arguably Australia's most multicultural state with 20% of Victorians speaking a language other than English at home, one in four Victorians born overseas, and 43.5% of Victorians either born overseas or having one or more parents born overseas. Victorians speak over 150 languages, come from over 200 countries and practice over 100 religions. We are truly a multicultural and multi-faith society.

Much work has been done in the community harmony area by the Victorian Government in areas like outlawing racial and religious vilification, promoting inter-faith dialogue and funding advertising programs including 'Just Like You'.

With recent world-wide events raising community anxiety about issues like terrorism and communal conflict it is critical that Victoria maintains its enviable position as a peaceful, harmonious and multicultural society. The continuation of this positive environment requires significant and ongoing political leadership at the State Government level.

Community Harmony policy recommendations:

1. That the incoming Victorian Government commit to supporting and maintaining the *Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001*. This Act ensures that extremists in the Victorian community cannot peddle hatred and incite community disharmony.
2. That the incoming Victorian Government commit to supporting the *Multicultural Victoria Act 2004*. This Act outlines the principles of multiculturalism and non-discrimination in Victoria.
3. That the incoming Victorian Government continues to support education, advertising and multi-faith initiatives which encourage understanding, acceptance and friendship between different groups within our multicultural society.
4. That the incoming Victorian Government continues to support appropriate funding of Victorian Government agencies and departments promoting multiculturalism, and also appropriate funding for agencies in the multicultural sector.
5. That the incoming Victorian Government promotes a zero-tolerance approach to racial harassment and discrimination.

Estimated Budget

Estimated cost to budget: NIL (the above policy represents a continuation of existing programs).



5. Multicultural Policing Strategy

Victoria Police is doing positive work in implementing multicultural policing strategies through its multicultural liaison officers, its multicultural advisory committee and further behind the scenes work in developing appropriate multicultural community policing strategies. This work needs to be consolidated and launched as a ***Multicultural Policing Strategy*** with a significant funding commitment from Government.

Problems between police and multicultural youth, particularly from new and emerging communities such as the Sudanese and Horn of Africa community, have been documented in the media recently. This points to the need for more policy work in this area.

A ***Multicultural Policing Strategy*** would include:

1. Providing extensive cultural awareness training to existing police and future recruits, including educating Victoria Police about the need for sensitivity when dealing with multicultural communities and the need to avoid racial stereotyping.
2. A commitment to recruiting and training police from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds and placing them in areas with high CALD populations.
3. Funding positive community interactions between local police and local culturally and linguistically diverse youth outside of a law and order context.
4. Funding further Police Multicultural Liaison Officers in areas with high CALD populations.
5. Ensuring that dedicated funding for multicultural policing strategies comes from within Victoria Police and is not provided by outside agencies with more limited resources such as VMC.
6. Ensuring that any anti-terrorism police work is carried out appropriately and in a manner that does not stigmatise or discriminate against entire communities.
7. Ensuring that there is adequate community understanding and promotion of telephone emergency services and adequate cultural awareness training and interpreter services among telephone emergency services staff.

Estimated Budget

Initiative	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	TOTAL
Multicultural Policing Strategy	\$1m	\$1m	\$1m	\$1m	\$4m



6. Multicultural Women's Strategy

Women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds often face significant challenges and discrimination which places them at a particular disadvantage as they begin their new lives in Australia. These issues can relate to cultural issues including different expectations around the role of women in Australia compared to a CALD woman's country of origin. Women from new and emerging communities such as our African communities have significantly less income than other Victorians and suffer higher rates of unemployment. CALD women from new and emerging communities may face harassment in public, particularly on our public transport system. They can also be affected by issues which impact on all women like family violence, but may not have similar access to programs that address these issues which often cater predominantly for mainstream clients.

The Victorian Government has concluded its CALD Women's project some time ago. The report of this project should be released and the recommendations of the report responded to in a reasonable timeframe. This report would help form the basis of a decent *Multicultural Women's Strategy*. In the ongoing absence of this report ECCV suggests the following initiatives.

A *Multicultural Women's Strategy* would include:

1. Ensuring that domestic violence funding, strategies, and education and empowerment programs are appropriately targeted at CALD women, and particularly women from new and emerging communities. These programs should be developed in consultation with CALD women.
2. Sexual assault strategies and refuges need to take into account the sensitivities of CALD women's family arrangements.
3. Supporting newly arrived migrants with English language acquisition, recognising that the current allocation of English language training by the Federal Government is insufficient to gain the English language skills required for many employment positions.
4. Ensuring that women doctors are available in sufficient numbers to CALD women who require women doctors due to cultural preferences, particularly in regional Victoria.
5. Ensuring that female interpreters are available for sensitive health matters for CALD women who require female interpreters due to cultural preferences.
6. Ensuring that adequate mental health programs are in place for women from new and emerging communities suffering the effects of any trauma and/or torture prior to migrating to Australia.
7. Developing strategies and policies to overcome isolation for CALD women from new and emerging communities, particularly in regional Victoria.
8. Ensuring that older CALD women who may be carrying the burden of care with any disadvantaged family members are educated about and use carer respite programs.
9. Full public release and launch of the Victorian Government CALD Women's Project.

Estimated Budget

Initiative	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	TOTAL
Multicultural Women's Strategy	\$1m	\$1m	\$1m	\$1m	\$4m



7. Multicultural Youth Policy

Young people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds, particularly from new and emerging communities, also face many challenges in the Victorian community. CALD young people may face higher levels of poverty, educational disadvantage and inadequate housing. The Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues (CMYI) provides advocacy services for youth from refugee and migrant backgrounds.

CALD young people face discrimination and harassment because of their visibility in public spaces, particularly when congregating in groups. This may lead to unwarranted police harassment. Media reports regarding CALD young people, particularly from new and emerging African and Middle-Eastern communities, can often be unduly alarmist and disregard the fact that most young male communities have elements that are attracted to gangs and violence. Young people from CALD backgrounds may also face harassment on inadequately safeguarded public transport systems.

Victorian Schools need continued strengthened support for professional development around CALD student issues, particularly for students from refugee backgrounds. After Hours Ethnic Schools funding is constantly under pressure because State Schools are charging ever-escalating rates of rent for ethnic schools to use state school premises after hours. In light of the Victorian Government's community strengthening objectives, after hours ethnic schools should be considered part of the wider community and offered discounted and uniform rental rates.

Refugee youth require particular policy strategies having experienced serious hardship from their refugee experience. Young CALD people also need targeted education around health issues, including in areas like drug and alcohol abuse and sexual health. Parents of adolescents from CALD communities may require parental support programs targeted to their particular needs. Finally, in line with our *Multicultural Policing Strategy* programs need to be implemented to encourage interaction between multicultural younger people and the police and justice system.

Recommendations for multicultural youth policy:

1. Investing further resources for teachers and schools educating students from new and emerging communities and refugee backgrounds.
2. Standardising discounted rental rates for after-hours ethnic schools using State Government school resources.
3. Funding of initiatives to encourage positive interaction between CALD youth and police and justice systems outside of a law and order context, as outlined in the Multicultural Policing Strategy.
4. Development of CALD youth specific education programs in areas like drug and alcohol abuse and sexual health.
5. Development of parental support programs for parents of CALD youth.
6. Ongoing adequate funding of CMYI to perform its youth advocacy and policy role.
7. Development of media awards for positive, non-stereotypical portrayals of CALD youth.

Estimated Budget

Initiative	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	TOTAL
Multicultural Youth Policy	\$1m	\$1m	\$1m	\$1m	\$4m



8. Regional Multicultural Policy

Regional migration in Victoria has a long history with migrants attracted to the Victorian goldfields of the nineteenth century and many post-war migrants being attracted to Victoria's agricultural industries. More recently other communities have begun establishing themselves in regional Victoria, such as the growing Sudanese community in Ballarat and Warrnambool. While the levels of cultural diversity are sometimes not as high in regional Victoria as they are in metropolitan Melbourne (with some notable exceptions) this can present further challenges as migrants often face greater settlement challenges without the support of large established migrant communities and large government funded service providers. Many migrants, particularly unemployed female partners of skilled migrants, may face loneliness and isolation in their new communities.

The Victorian Government's Skilled Migration Strategy, run by the Department for Victorian Communities and with partners including Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria and local government, has been successful in attracting and retaining migrants in regional Victoria. Funding for this strategy expires in June 2007. This funding should be extended to enable the good work already undertaken to continue. Much of the settlement effort in regional Victoria also relies on the hard work of volunteers. This needs to be recognised and supported through appropriate government intervention.

While attracting skilled and other migrants to regional Victoria can have strong benefits for regional communities, more resources need to be provided to multicultural groups to support the settlement and welcoming process for new regional migrants. Regional services also need to be provided in a culturally competent manner recognising the changing human face of regional Victoria. While many of these challenges may relate to insufficient Federal Government migrant settlement support funding, there is still much the Victorian Government can do in this area.

Regional multicultural policy recommendations:

1. That the Victorian Government provide greater funding and assistance to regional ethnic communities' councils and multicultural groups to assist migrants to settle in regional areas.
2. That the Victorian Government's regional skilled migration strategy be extended for a further three years to continue the good work of this strategy. Regional Ethnic Communities Councils should also be funded under this strategy to improve linkages between local government and local multicultural communities.
3. That the Victorian Government should develop strategies to increase the provision of language services in regional areas through greater funding of interpreters, ensuring government department language services policies are followed in regional Victoria, offering scholarships to bilingual persons from new and emerging communities in regional areas, and ensuring sufficient numbers of female interpreters are available for regional CALD communities whose female populations have a preference for female interpreters.
4. That the Victorian Government fund research into loneliness and isolation issues around migrants in regional Victoria and develop strategies to overcome these problems.



5. That the Victorian Government work with the Federal Government to ensure that female doctors are in place in regional areas where CALD communities' female members have a preference for female doctors.
6. That greater funding be given to promoting multicultural arts and events in regional Victoria, particularly in the targeted regional migration areas of Ballarat, Bendigo, Geelong, Gippsland, Horsham, Mildura, Shepparton, Swan Hill, Wangaratta, Warrnambool, Wodonga and the regions around those areas (in line with Multicultural Arts policy recommendations).
7. That the various regional service providers are encouraged and assisted to work more collaboratively on CALD service provision issues through working groups and greater sharing of information and ideas.
8. That more research be done on the recognition of overseas qualifications and skills to see if this is causing barriers to skilled migration and addressing skills shortages in regional Victoria.
9. That appropriate cross-cultural awareness training and cultural competence strategies are implemented with government service providers in regional areas attracting migrants, particularly in health, education, transport and child-care. Proper promotion and education regarding these services also needs to be provided to regional migrants to aid in the settlement process.

Estimated Budget

Initiative	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	TOTAL
Regional Multicultural Policy <i>(including continued funding of Regional Skilled Migration Strategy with regional ECC component)</i>	\$2m	\$2m	\$2m	\$2m	\$8m



9. CALD Alcohol and Drugs Issues

ECCV supports and advocates for a harm minimisation approach to issues relating to alcohol and other drug use and abuse. Alcohol and other drug prevention and treatment programs and services need to have a greater emphasis on targeting CALD communities. While overall CALD communities may sometimes have lower incidences of alcohol and other drug use than more established Australian communities, there is a need for better research that identifies particular CALD communities that have higher levels of alcohol and drug abuse (including tobacco use) and related health and social problems, including prevalence of blood borne virus rates acquired through IV drug use.

Research and data around drug and alcohol use in particular ethnic communities is patchy particularly with regards to second generation Australians from CALD backgrounds. Important policy projects are being funded by the Department of Human Services, including the Multicultural Health and Support Service (MHSS) which is addressing Blood Borne Virus issues in the Vietnamese, Thai, Arabic and Horn of Africa communities. ECCV also continues to provide significant support, advocacy and representative services through its Drugs Taskforce to many such projects but this work is largely unfunded. There is a need for a further comprehensive CALD alcohol and other drug abuse strategy, which would include the funding of a full time policy officer working from an appropriate multicultural agency like ECCV or CEH.

CALD Alcohol and Drug Issues Policy recommendations:

1. ECCV or a like organisation should receive ongoing funding for a full-time drug and alcohol policy officer to research alcohol and other drug abuse within CALD communities; provide information and education services to CALD communities about alcohol and drug abuse prevention strategies; improve cultural awareness among mainstream service providers in this area; collaborate with other agencies around projects in this area; and support ethnic community initiatives and partnerships which aim to minimise harm from alcohol and other drug use within CALD communities.
2. The Department of Human Services should strengthen its capacity to ensure mainstream agencies are meeting the needs of CALD communities in the alcohol and other drug harm minimisation area.
3. Government should develop further data and research around alcohol and other drug use in particular ethnic communities.
4. That the policy recommendations in *the Drugs in a Multicultural Community* report be implemented.

Estimated Budget

Initiative	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	TOTAL
CALD Alcohol and Drug Issues Policy	\$.3m	\$.3m	\$.3m	\$.3m	\$1.2m



10. CALD Disability Policy

People from CALD backgrounds with a disability often face double disadvantage. Disadvantage due to their disability and disadvantage due to language and cultural barriers. Research from the Victorian Department of Human Services has shown that only five per cent of disability service users are from a CALD background which is well below their representation in the Victorian community. While the government has increased disability programs under the *Creating new opportunities for people with a Disability* strategy more work can be done to ensure that CALD people with disabilities are receiving appropriate care and support. Greater funding and programs are needed to strengthen services to CALD people with disabilities.

CALD Disability policy recommendations:

1. Home and Community Care strategies should be strengthened both in providing more funding for ethno-specific service delivery and in ongoing funding for strategies to increase the uptake of mainstream services by CALD people (see also Multicultural Aged Care Strategy for more details on HACC).
2. Funding should be allocated for community development and capacity building within ethnic communities to raise awareness about disability services and carer and respite programs, reduce any cultural stigma associated with disabilities and facilitate better access to services.
3. Trial funding should be allocated for early intervention (0-6 years) and parenting skills for CALD children with disabilities and their families. This would help reduce lifelong disadvantage caused by a lack of early intervention for these children and families.
4. The Victorian Government should implement further systems and monitoring of agencies delivering disability services to CALD clients to ensure that CALD targets are met and service delivery is culturally competent.
5. The Victorian Government should continue the roll-out of current CALD initiatives for people with a disability.

Estimated Budget

Initiative	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	TOTAL
CALD Disability Policy	\$1m	\$1m	\$1m	\$1m	\$4m



11. CALD Mental Health Policy

As in the area of disability, people from CALD backgrounds with mental health illness often face double disadvantage, both due to their mental illness and cultural and language barriers. Research from the Victorian Transcultural Psychiatry Unit has shown that people from CALD backgrounds have significantly lower access to mental health services than other people. Further, when they do access some of these services, they tend to spend more time as an in-patient. Access to psychiatric disability rehabilitation and support programs is also lower. Research has also shown that CALD people's lower access to mental health services has not improved in the last ten years. While the government has increased mental health programs under its *Increasing Support for Mental Health Services* strategy more work can be done to ensure that CALD people with mental health issues are receiving appropriate care and support. Again, greater funding and programs are needed to strengthen services to CALD people with mental health issues. ECCV understands the Government is currently working on addressing CALD mental health issues and that several initiatives may be announced soon. This work is greatly appreciated and ECCV eagerly awaits these announcements.

CALD Mental Health policy recommendations:

1. That the State Government commits funding to mainstream and community based mental health providers to deliver culturally competent services appropriate for CALD people with mental health issues.
2. That the State Government allocates funding for community development, education, information sharing and capacity building within ethnic communities to raise awareness about mental health services and carer and respite programs, reduce any stigma associated with mental health illness and help facilitate CALD access to mental health services.
3. That the State Government implement further systems and monitoring of agencies delivering mental health services to CALD clients to ensure that CALD targets are met and service delivery is culturally competent.

Estimated Budget

Initiative	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	TOTAL
CALD Mental Health Policy	\$1m	\$1m	\$1m	\$1m	\$4m



12. Arts and Culture

Victoria is one of the most culturally vibrant, sophisticated and diverse communities in the world with our hundreds of different cultures, languages and religions. This diversity is often not well represented in our publicly funded arts sector. The recent Multicultural Arts Victoria and Victorian Multicultural Commission report on *Arts in a Multicultural Victoria* found that there were strong perceptions from many grass roots CALD artists that the multicultural arts sector was under resourced and under represented within Victorian arts programs and initiatives. The report noted that multicultural arts remain peripheral in Government funding, policy and resourcing. It noted that in 2005 as little as 3.5% in Arts Victoria funding was spent on multicultural arts, despite 20% of Victorians speaking a languages other than English at home and up to 40% of Victorians coming from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. While it is pleasing that a high-level working group has recently been established to begin addressing these issues, more needs to be done, particularly with regards to equitable funding for multicultural arts.

Multicultural Arts policy recommendations:

1. That Victorian State Government arts funding be significantly increased for multicultural artists and events so that such funding is far more representative of Victoria's cultural diversity and therefore more equitable.
2. That Arts Victoria develop a multicultural arts strategy and embeds the associated values and goals of that strategy throughout that organisation.
3. That greater assistance be provided to Multicultural Arts Victoria (MAV), to enable it to educate, develop, assist and promote multicultural arts, including consideration of a venue for Multicultural Arts Victoria to showcase Victoria's talented multicultural artists.
4. That greater funding be given to promoting multicultural arts and events in regional Victoria, particularly in the targeted regional migration areas of Ballarat, Bendigo, Geelong, Gippsland, Horsham, Mildura, Shepparton, Swan Hill, Wangaratta, Warrnambool, Wodonga and the regions around those areas.

Estimated Budget

Estimated cost to budget: This policy could be funded through a reallocation of existing resources. If existing resources could not be reallocated funding in the vicinity of \$2 million per annum would be required. A one-off capital funding of around \$5 million may be required if an MAV Arts Venue is to be established.



13. Diversity in Government

The Victorian Government has undertaken some good work in encouraging cultural diversity in government. The *Multicultural Victoria Act 2004* empowers the Victorian Multicultural Commission (VMC) to monitor and report on the appointment of people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds to Government boards and committees. However progress can be slow with little change in the overall cultural composition of boards in the most recent VMC report on these matters. This has prompted VMC to develop a register of CALD people for board appointments. The State Services Authority has also developed two publications aimed at improving equal employment opportunity and cultural and linguistic diversity in the Victorian Public Service (VPS). Within the VPS many departments are underspending on their Government ethnic advertising targets of 5%, which places a question mark over the capacity of some departments to commit to cultural diversity goals.

Still more can be done to encourage greater diversity in our Victorian Public Service. While our Victorian Parliament increasingly reflects the diverse human face of Victoria many of our senior executive positions within the Victorian Public Service still continue to be dominated by people from non-CALD backgrounds. The Victorian Government needs to commit to a strategy of diversity management to increase productive diversity and cultural competence within the VPS.

Diversity in Government recommendations:

1. That the Victorian State Government should commit to a diversity management strategy to increase productive diversity and cultural competence within the Victorian Public Service.
2. That the Victorian Multicultural Commission or the State Services Authority be empowered to monitor productive diversity, cultural competence and CALD employment rates (including senior employment) within the Victorian Public Service and set appropriate diversity targets.
3. That Victorian Government Departments who fail to spend the required 5% of their advertising expenditure on ethnic advertising should be forced to spend the amount of funding they underspent on ethnic advertising on services for CALD communities.

Estimated Budget

Estimated cost to budget: NIL (the above can be funded through existing resources).

