



**ethnic
communities'
council of
victoria**

Patron

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

30 March 2012

**ECCV SUBMISSION ON THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT
AGED CARE APPROVALS ROUND 2012 TO THE DEPARTMENT
OF HEALTH AND AGEING**

1. Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria (ECCV) welcomes the opportunity to present a submission on the Australian Government Aged Care Approvals Round 2012 to the Department of Health and Ageing.
2. ECCV is the state-wide peak advocacy body representing ethno-specific agencies and multicultural organisations. For over 30 years ECCV has remained the principal liaison point between ethnic communities, government and the wider community in Victoria. ECCV has been a key player in building Victoria as a successful, harmonious and multicultural society.
3. ECCV membership consists of approximately 200 organisations that represent groups with an ethnic or multicultural focus, organisations with an interest in these areas, or individuals who support ECCV. The majority of those members are not-for-profit community service organisations. They provide services in areas such as aged care, migration, discrimination, community harmony, employment, education and training, health and community services, law and justice, as well as the arts and culture.
4. ECCV welcomes the national planning process for the distribution of new aged care services for the 2012 Approvals Round and appreciates the opportunity to provide input on behalf of culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) welfare and community-based service organisations.

Special needs groups

5. ECCV emphasises that culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) seniors in Victoria over the age of 65, and more-so over 70, have specialised care needs. In the Melbourne metropolitan region 38% of people over 65 years of age have a culturally and linguistically diverse background and 2% in rural and regional Victoria (Howe 2006). Feedback from ethno-specific welfare agencies, multicultural organisations, the ECCV Aged Care Policy Committee and ECCV community consultations in 2012 indicate that CALD seniors in Victoria have special aged care needs because many:
 - Have fragmented families unable to provide support
 - Choose to live at home longer
 - Revert back to their first language other than English
 - Tend to lose their last acquired language (usually English)
 - Have a preference for culturally and linguistically appropriate aged care support services and therefore often receive none because of special needs service gaps
 - Exhibit a high incidence of behaviours of concern in advanced age

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- Exhibit severe BPSD (Behaviour and Psychological Symptoms of Dementia) due to past experiences of war and trauma and other culturally sensitive issues
 - Are socially isolated
 - Lack support networks and are more likely to find themselves in crisis situations with minimal support
6. ECCV has feedback and reports from ethno-specific agencies that indicate many CALD seniors over 65 years of age are financially and socially disadvantaged because they:
- Experienced long-term unemployment
 - Depend on a Government Pension
 - Live in public housing
 - Are socially disconnected due to migration and fragmented families
7. CALD seniors who are financially and socially disadvantaged and live in rural and regional Victoria experience multiple disadvantages. Many CALD seniors who live outside metropolitan areas of Victoria have limited social and family support in their advanced age. In addition they have less or no access to residential aged care facilities due to geographical distance. They choose to remain living at home in familiar settings and have limited or no access to special needs CALD aged care packages.
8. There is a rise in people living alone in Victoria (Social Cities, March 2012). ECCV has community feedback that a high percentage of CALD women over the age of 70 are widows and live alone without social or aged care support. The number of CALD widows is even higher for people over 80 when they are frailer and less able to cope on their own. This is reflected in Census 2006 data, which also indicates that, in general, twice as many women aged over 80 express Need for Assistance as men, in part owing to their greater longevity. As a result they experience more social isolation and also tend not to access institutionalised aged care support.
9. According to the Review of Literature Concerning the Delivery of Community Aged Care Services to Ethnic Groups: Mainstream versus Ethno-specific Services - it's not an either-or prepared by Monash University for ECCV:
- More older CALD people choose to remain living at home than the average population;
 - CALD seniors express a preference for ethno-specific services;
 - An extensive network of ethno-specific aged care, welfare and community services agencies exists throughout metropolitan Melbourne and has the capacity to deliver aged care packages but currently lack sufficient CACPs allocations.

Dementia-specific Issues

10. Dementia-related community service providers have indicated to ECCV that CALD people over the age of 70 have higher levels of advanced dementia due to cultural and linguistic barriers which prevent them from accessing services and obtaining early intervention. In addition CALD seniors have higher rates of depression and BPSD (Behaviour and Psychological Symptoms of Dementia).
11. Reports to ECCV by multicultural aged care providers indicate that, in ethnic communities, behaviours of concern amongst ethnic seniors are minimised when they receive culturally appropriate aged care packages or ethno-specific social support in culturally appropriate residential aged care facilities.



Service Gaps

12. A considerable service gap exists in relation to specifically allocated special needs aged care packages for CALD seniors living in the community and the increasing demand. ECCV consultations conducted in February 2012 indicate that special needs ethno-specific CACPs are particularly suitable for the needs of ageing CALD people, significantly improving their quality of life and wellbeing.
13. Long waiting lists are experienced by CALD seniors in all regions of the Melbourne metropolitan area in Victoria for EACH and EACH-D.
14. There is a tendency for CALD seniors to avoid accessing services until they reach high care needs because there are insufficient CACPs available in the category of special needs for CALD people. S2S waitlist shows significant waitlists for CACP and EACH and EACH-D packages. This is also reflected in ethno-specific agency waitlists, demonstrating the demand by CALD community members' preference for CALD packages to be delivered by ethno-specific agencies.
15. CALD seniors with aged care needs are likely to access services later when they reach a crisis point. In addition they have cultural sensitivities regarding institutionalisation and choose not to use residential aged care facilities according to the Access Economics report *Making Choices* (April 2009).
16. There is a rapidly increasing older ethnic population as demonstrated by ABS Census Data and an under-current of unmet needs, pointing to an urgent need for an increase in the allocation of ethno-specific aged care packages.
17. ECCV have received feedback that CALD seniors value the trusting relationships that they have built with their current ethno-specific and multicultural CACP providers. An example of the feedback that ECCV has received is that non-English speaking elderly people and their families want to use services provided by ethno-specific organisations because the communication and cultural issues are the major barriers to services being appropriate and usable.

Demand and Supply Issues

18. ECCV community consultations with stakeholders in the multicultural sector indicated consistent concern that the actual CALD community requirements for special needs CACPs, EACH and EACH-D are under-represented by the current Australian Government ACAR planning process. Concern was expressed that EACH and EACH-D services were promoted by the Australian Government but the supply was not maintained.
19. ECCV received feedback that the wait lists for EACH and EACH-D in the Metropolitan Melbourne Region are excessively long, often over 9 months. Many frail and elderly CALD background people deteriorated to such a degree that they never received the care packages they so urgently needed, leaving families distraught and multicultural aged care providers frustrated and overwhelmed. A reported result of this unmet need is premature or inappropriate admission to residential aged care facilities.
20. ECCV received reports from ethno-specific agencies that CALD seniors face long waiting lists for EACH and EACH-D in the metropolitan regions of Melbourne. As a consequence there is pressure on providers to take on large numbers of seniors at the high care end of CACPs based on the



principle that 'some service is better than one.' The disproportionate number of high care CACPs clients sometimes generates additional financial viability and management challenges for providers.

21. The current S2S waitlist for CACP, EACH and EACH D consists of:

- **487** multicultural aged people waiting for a service in the Northwest Region
- **637** multicultural aged people waiting for a service in the Southern Region
- **387** multicultural aged people waiting for a service in the Eastern Region
- **284** multicultural aged people waiting for a service in the Barwon Region

22. Ethno-specific agencies welcome working in partnership with mainstream aged care providers. Ethno-specific agencies report that there is a tendency among some mainstream providers to seek support and advice on issues relating to appropriate care for CALD client needs.

Residential respite care

23. CALD seniors are less likely to access residential care where their language is not used. Ideally additional ethno-specific residential facilities are required.

Support for carers

24. Support for unpaid carers remains minimal, leaving many carers stressed and distraught.

Options to meet identified needs

25. Aged care services that provide enhanced consumer choice were consistently advocated according to Home and Community Care (HACC) Active Service Model consultations with ECCV; and ECCV forums with ethnic stakeholders.

26. ECCV recommends a mix of CACPs or EACH and temporary residential respite to better serve the aged care needs of CALD seniors and their families allowing them to choose a balance of community and residential services to meet their changing circumstances regarding, for example, part-time workforce commitments, travel for family reunion reasons and family emergencies.

CALD special needs in geographic areas of interest

Priority ethnic groups

27. As a priority ECCV recommends additional CACPs allocations for special needs CALD seniors throughout the Melbourne metropolitan area.

28. The CALD population in Melbourne and Victoria consists of a mosaic of ethnic groups that are ageing at varying rates. CALD seniors with European backgrounds and some Asian language groups require additional CACPs, EACH and temporary respite allocations in the next five to ten years; and then Asian and Middle Eastern background seniors will be the dominant groups with aged care needs up to 2050 (Howe 2006; Access Economic 2009).

29. ECCV consultations in 2012 indicated that CALD clients prefer to seek services from ethnic welfare organisations. Similarly, ECCV have been petitioned by ethnic community-service and multicultural organisations most of which have not received appropriate increases in community aged care package allocations for several years. The community organisations represent rapidly ageing ethnic groups including Russian, Croatian, Serbian, Chinese, Greek and Macedonian seniors as well as German-speakers in the Melbourne metropolitan area.



Priority geographic areas

30. Ethno-specific and multicultural organisations feedback to ECCV highlights the need for additional services for CALD seniors in certain ethnic groups and in specific geographic areas. ECCV supports the need for more special needs aged care packages in the following areas:
- CACPs required for Maltese seniors in Gippsland;
 - CACPs and EACH for Croatian background seniors in the Geelong area;
 - CACPs for Croatian and Filipino seniors in the northern metropolitan area of Melbourne;
 - Sri Lankan specific residential care – both high care and low care - in the southern metropolitan Melbourne especially the LGA of Kingston, Greater Dandenong, Monash and Casey;
 - Special needs CACPs for German-speakers and Dutch people in the south-eastern Melbourne metropolitan area especially including the LGA of Knox.
 - Special needs CACPS for Russian seniors and seniors of Jewish background in the southern metropolitan Melbourne LGAs of Greater Dandenong, Casey, Glen Eira, Stonnington and Port Phillip.
 - Additional special needs CACP and new EACH and EACH D are needed for Chinese seniors in the Northern, Southern, Eastern and Western Metropolitan areas of Melbourne.
 - Additional special needs CACPs, EACH and EACH D for CALD seniors in the western and northern metropolitan area of Melbourne.

Recommendations

31. ECCV recommends an increase in the overall allocation of CALD special needs community aged care packages, temporary residential respite; dementia-related support and ethno-specific residential aged care places throughout the Melbourne metropolitan area to better serve the needs of the rapidly ageing multicultural community in Victoria.
32. ECCV recommends aged care services that provide increased consumer choice in the CALD ageing community in Victoria and more flexible combinations of services.
33. To enable a multicultural 'ageing in place' approach, ECCV recommend that ethno-specific and multicultural agencies currently allocated CACP packages also be allocated EACH and EACH-D packages.
34. To ensure that aged care package allocations directly benefit non-English speaking older people, ECCV recommend that CACP and EACH packages be made to ethno-specific agencies and multicultural organisations.

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