



**Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria's (ECCV) Response
To
Well for Life Emotional Wellbeing Evaluation
At the Department of Health
November 2009**

Background

1. Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria (ECCV) advocates and lobbies all levels of government on behalf of multicultural communities in a range of areas especially aged care. Our role includes supporting, consulting, liaising with and providing information to Victoria's ethnic communities.
2. Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria (ECCV) welcomes the opportunity for representation on the Well for Life Reference Group at the Department of Health to provide input to the *Emotional Wellbeing Evaluation* component.
3. ECCV applauds the Department's Well for Life project that seeks to enable active and positive ageing through promoting physical activity, nutrition and emotional wellbeing including the development of related documents that provide information, help sheets and resources for service providers.
4. ECCV takes part in the Well for Life Reference Group as a consumer peak body representing the multicultural aged care community sector. In addition three of our Council's organisational members are Well for Life providers in the framework of cultural diversity. These are the Victorian Arabic Social Services (VASS), the Australian Greek Welfare Society (AGWS) and Diversitat.

Diversity Framework

5. ECCV supports the concept of diversity that encompasses acceptance and respect for all Victorians' differences in relation to ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities and religious beliefs.
6. ECCV is concerned that a considerable number of seniors from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds have cultural preferences and limited English language competence which can impact on their emotional wellbeing.
7. ECCV acknowledges that within the framework of diversity, a significant proportion of Victoria's population of seniors would benefit from a focus on culturally competent services. By 2011 approximately 38% of people over 65

years in the Melbourne metropolitan area and 2% in the Victorian rural and regional area will be from a culturally and linguistically diverse background (Howe 2006). In some local government areas that figure is already between 50% and 60%.

Recommendations

8. In response to the draft document *Well for Life: Improving Emotional Wellbeing at Home - Version 5, 9 November 2009* (referred to as the draft document), ECCV recommends an overlay of cultural competency strategies and considerations especially regarding the facilitator's guide, help sheets, strategies and suggested resources.

9. ECCV recommends the following diversity considerations for the draft document:

- a. Recognition of the 'specialised expertise' of staff in ethnic and multicultural welfare and community-based organisations, in relation to the delivery of culturally competent aged care services. This relates specifically to their capacity to provide cultural competency briefings, advice and workshops; advice on cultural backgrounds and perceptions; practical translation advice and guidelines; and advice to residential care providers on support for their culturally diverse residents.
- b. A focus on improving the cultural competency and sensitivity of service providers who have contact with non-English speaking seniors and older people with cultural preferences.
- c. Suggestions for developing flexible partnership models of service delivery with ethnic and multicultural community-based organisations to meet the needs of diverse older people.
- d. The importance of acknowledging Health and Community Care (HACC) social support programs especially Planned Activity Groups (PAGs), as a crucial access point to aged care information for older people with culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- e. The importance of the Supported Access Model for assisting multicultural older people who live at home, to access appropriate aged care support and services for their physical and emotional wellbeing.
- f. A focus on easy access to interpreters and translations for non-English speaking seniors.
- g. The inclusion of the ECCV *Multicultural Aged Care Services Directory 2009* as a diversity resource for service providers.

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