



**ethnic
communities'
council of
victoria**

10 December 2007

ECCV SUBMISSION TO THE DEPARTMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE

Towards an Integrated and Sustainable Transport Future: A New Legislative Framework for Transport in Victoria

1. The Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria (ECCV) welcomes the opportunity to present a submission to the Department of Infrastructure's *New Legislative Framework for Transport in Victoria*.
2. ECCV is the state-wide peak advocacy body representing ethnic and multicultural communities in Victoria. 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 supports the new Legislative Review's aim to address disadvantage to transport access and modernise transport infrastructure development. Access to transport is a significant issue for those who have low-incomes and others who are disadvantaged such as those suffering from disabilities and those from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds. The Legislative Review needs to invest in the development of programs which address the need for disadvantaged migrants to take advantage of Victoria's expanding public and private transport systems.
4. ECCV would like to emphasise that access to public transport for older people from CALD backgrounds and those from new and emerging communities should be a key future priority for the Legislative Review. Therefore, ECCV recommends that two new transport system objectives be added into the Review.

Proposed transport system objective: A consumer focused system.

While ECCV is in full support of the existing transport system objectives outlined in the discussion paper, ECCV believes that the Legislative Review should include a strong focus to develop policies which improve service delivery and encourage consumers to use Victoria's public transport facilities. To ensure all Victorians have adequate access to Victoria's transport system, ECCV recommends that the following principles be addressed by the Review:

- Provide more translated documents on public transport in more community languages particularly targeting the languages spoken by new and emerging communities.
- A need for the Department of Infrastructure to take responsibility for Community Transport and include it as a policy and service portfolio.

Statewide Resources Centre
150 Palmerston Street
Carlton Victoria 3053

t 03 9349 4122
f 03 9349 4967
eccv@eccv.org.au
www.eccv.org.au

ABN 65071572705



- Provide assistance to migrants to attain driver's licenses.
- Improve and expand public transport in outer suburbs and regional areas where populations are growing.

Proposed transport system objective: A system that supports career development.

ECCV believes it is important to provide support in skill and career development for current and prospective public transport officers and operators. ECCV recommends that the following be implemented into the Legislative Review.

- The Department of Infrastructure should further develop a targeted recruitment and mentoring program to support public transport workers.
 - Extending cultural awareness training for new and existing ticket inspectors and transport officers.
 - Implementing skill and career development programs for taxi drivers, especially those from migrant backgrounds.
5. ECCV recommends that the Legislative Review specify objectives for VicRoads to develop programs that address the needs of new arrival community members to gain their driver's license. People from new and emerging community groups have difficulties in attaining their driver's license when compared to most other Victorians. Many migrants from new and emerging communities, especially single mothers and young people need to have access to private transport in order to go about their day-to-day activities and accessing the community.

Barriers to gaining a driver's license include the cost of driving lessons, accessibility to a safe and road worthy vehicle, accessibility to a full licensed holder to assist with driving practice to ensure sufficient hours of driving are accrued prior to sitting a driving test, misunderstanding of rules and regulations and language barriers. This has led to some people driving without licenses. ECCV firmly believes that there is a need to address these issues so that our new and emerging communities can access the same opportunities as other Victorians. In response, the Legislative Review should empower VicRoads to establish and resource a volunteer training program which offers lessons with a minimal cost across the state.

6. ECCV recommends that the Legislative Review should specifically acknowledge and seek to address the particular disadvantage experienced by rural and regional communities in relation to public transport. Access to regular and reliable public transportation is an ongoing issue in many regional communities and CALD communities can be particularly disadvantaged in terms of access.
7. As a number of CALD community members have difficulties reading English, including a number of them having a disability, ECCV considers the development of multilingual documents at Victoria's public transport transit points a key priority. A greater investment in multilingual booklets and leaflets not only benefits migrants but also the high number of tourists that come to Victoria per year. This would ensure that directions and information are understood by those with low-level English proficiency and ensure maximum effectiveness of communication strategies.



8. ECCV acknowledges the Victorian Government's recognition of the issues surrounding accessibility by some of Victoria's disadvantaged communities. Alongside our newly arrived migrants, Victoria is experiencing a rapidly growing ageing population. By 2011, 38 per cent of seniors in Melbourne will be from CALD backgrounds. The need for a comprehensive, consumer focused and accessible Victorian Transport Strategy has never been greater.
9. A greater allocation of funding and planning for Community Transport options for the many Victorians who are unable to access public or private forms of transport is needed. Community Transport options currently cater to, but are not limited to, the frail aged, people who are isolated or socio-economically disadvantaged, people with disabilities and young people. ECCV recommends that the Legislative Review incorporate Community Transport as a service and policy portfolio. The Legislative Review should also develop and coordinate funding initiatives to support vehicle purchase and changeover by Community Transport providers.
10. The Framework should allow the Department of Infrastructure to increase resources devoted to improving cultural awareness training for new and existing public transport officers and ticket inspectors. Training should include case studies and visits to ethnic community groups. It should be based on the establishment of partnerships with community groups and public transport officers.
11. The Legislative Review should allocate provisions to implement skill and career development programs for taxi drivers, especially those from new and emerging communities such as the Horn of Africa and Sudan. After much consultation with the Victorian Taxi Directorate and the Victorian Taxi Association, improving drivers' communication skills has been identified as a priority area for strengthening geographical knowledge and reducing the potential for communication breakdowns between drivers and passengers. Strengthening communication skills in the taxi industry for Horn of African drivers will result in the tangible benefits of improving customer service and work efficiency. For the drivers themselves, the programs seek to improve self esteem and assist in career development and exploration.
12. The Review should also consider developing a targeted recruitment strategy to attract employees with bilingual and bicultural skills. ECCV recommends that the Victorian Government should consider seeking an exemption from the Equal Employment Commission to engage a set number of people amongst its rank of transport workers in public contact areas with diverse language and cultural skills. Individuals with abilities in a second language and a cross-cultural understanding are valuable employees. Bilingual workers can be useful for communicating with clients with low-English language proficiency. Consumers may feel more comfortable speaking to customer service officers in the same language.
13. In conclusion, ECCV supports the Legislative Review's aim to strengthen and improve Victoria's public transport system. ECCV hopes that the Department of Infrastructure will give full consideration to ECCV's highlighted issues, objectives and strategies to address the needs of Victoria's culturally and linguistically diverse communities.