

ECCV Position Paper on Marriage Equality

September 2017

1. The Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria (ECCV) believes in freedom of speech and a balanced debate on equal marriage as long as it does not prejudice and harm people with diverse backgrounds including LGBTI (lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender and intersex) people.
2. ECCV upholds the protection of human rights for all culturally diverse groups in our society including those people with diverse gender and sexuality, and LGBTI people.
3. ECCV acknowledges that it may be challenging for some people from culturally diverse and multi-faith backgrounds to have conversations with their community about equal marriage and about issues related to people with diverse gender identity and sexuality.
4. ECCV recognised that beliefs in our community about gender diversity and sexuality have been rapidly changing resulting in greater awareness and acceptance.
5. The ECCV Board of Directors believes that marriage equality validates LGBTI people's right to exist as equals in our society and without discrimination and harm.
6. Following serious discussion and thoughtful consideration, the ECCV Board of Directors has aligned its position to that of the Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA) to support the principle of marriage equality.
7. The ECCV Board of Directors supports FECCA in urging ethnic and multicultural communities in Victoria and in Australia to vote yes to marriage equality.
8. The ECCV Board of Directors and members have long understood discrimination, as many of us and our families have experienced discrimination on the basis of our ethnicity, skin colour, faith and language.
9. The ECCV Board of Directors acknowledges that ethnic and multicultural LGBTI people exist in our culturally diverse communities; that they are our friends and our family members, and that LGBTI people, from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds face even more layers of discrimination.
10. ECCV members and their ancestors have migrated to Australia for a better life, to prosper and contribute to the nation building of Australia. As productive, law-abiding members of the Australian community, we expect to be treated fairly and so the ECCV Board of Directors also expects that our family members including those who are LGBTI be treated fairly and justly by civil law in all aspects, including civil marriage law.

11. ECCV acknowledges the importance of responding in a positive and supportive way when young people, older people or employees disclose their diverse gender identity and sexuality.
12. ECCV recognises that for many members of our community their diverse gender identity and sexual identity cannot be changed and is not a choice.

13. The ECCV Board of Directors affirms the following statement:

“As a culturally diverse Board of Directors at ECCV we uphold the importance of family life. Marriage equality is about joining families and strengthening family unity. Marriage equality creates more committed, stronger family bonds that will be protected by law, therefore marriage equality is good for our families and that in turn is good for our community.”

14. FECCA have supplied the following template provided by the Australian Equality Campaign to assist other ethnic and multicultural groups:

a. We, the [multicultural] community in Australia, have long understood discrimination, because we and our families have experienced discrimination on the basis of our race, skin colour, [job opportunities?] and language. Multicultural LGBTI people are in our community, they are our friends and family members, and they face even more discrimination.

b. Many of us have migrated to Australia for a better life, to prosper, so our families can flourish. As productive, law-abiding citizens, we expect to be treated fairly in Australia, and so we also expect that our family and friends who are LGBTI be treated fair and justly by civil law in all aspects, including civil marriage law.

c. As [multicultural people], the most important thing to us is our family. Marriage equality is about joining families and strengthening family unity. Marriage equality creates more committed, stronger family bonds that will be protected by law. Therefore Marriage Equality is good for our families and this is good for our community.

d. We urge all [multicultural] communities to Vote Yes to Marriage Equality