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Section 44 deters almost half of Australians from participating in federal politics

The Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria (ECCV) is aware that under Section 44 of the Australian Constitution, being a citizen of any other country makes an Australian incapable of running for or sitting in Federal Parliament as a senator or a member of the House of Representatives.

The ECCV Chairperson, Mr. Eddie Micallef states "Over a number of years, almost every part of Section 44 in the Constitution has proved difficult to interpret and apply. With Australia promoting ourselves as a successful multicultural nation, the Section 44 has the potential to exclude multicultural Victorian and the wider Australian population from participating in federal politics".

In contrast, our States and Federal Governments do not have a synchronised policy regarding dual citizenship. As it stands, State Members of Parliament can hold dual citizenship. Our fellow states also recognise the validity and enriched diversity that dual nationals bring to our country's states' political systems. Yet dual nations are prohibited from participating in Federal politics.

Our ethnic diversity and immigration is globally promoted as a major factor for our robust economy, enriched culture and our successes in international lifestyle rankings. The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), 2016 Census revealed that over a quarter of Australians were born overseas and 49% of people have at least one parent born overseas. Section 44 in its current form deters almost half of our entire Australian population from participating in Federal politics.

The ECCV Chairperson states "Dual citizenship reflects the multicultural society that is Australia. Many Australians hold dual citizenship as we've become an increasingly multicultural nation. A rigid constitution around renouncing dual citizenship significantly limits our society's civic participation". ECCV believes that dual citizenship should be seen as a positive complementary sense of identity, belonging and contribution to Australia instead of setting up a two-class citizenship system.

For more information and/or media comment, please contact Leenie Fabri, Communications & Media Officer, lfabri@eccv.org.au / 0421 433 049

References:

- [ECCV Position Paper on Dual Citizenship and Constitutional Legislation Restricting Political Participation](#)
- [Cultural Diversity in Australia 2016](#)