

**ECCV Submission  
to the  
ACIL Allen Consulting Evaluation  
of the  
Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP)**

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**December 2014**

The Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria Inc. (ECCV) is the Voice of Multicultural Victoria.

As the peak body for ethnic and multicultural organisations in Victoria, we are proud to have been the key advocate for culturally diverse communities in Victoria since 1974. For 40 years we have been the link between multicultural communities, government and the wider community.

We aim for a culturally diverse and harmonious society that is just, fair and inclusive where all people have the opportunity to participate in and contribute to, community life. We advocate for freedom, respect, equality and dignity for multicultural communities and strive with others, to build a strong, vibrant Victorian community.

The ECCV welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the ACIL Allen Consulting Evaluation of Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP).

**Is the AMEP well designed to meet the language and settlement needs of migrant/ humanitarian entrants including catering for clients from different visa streams?**

1. ECCV advocates for a more flexible AMEP to deliver English classed based on the needs of the individual new migrants and humanitarian entrants. Many new migrants and humanitarian entrants experience prolonged stay in refugee camps or in detention, disrupting their education. The AMEP needs to cater for students who have different levels of education and English proficiency, such as those who have had no experience of formal education, who are not literate in their own language as well as to those who have advanced English language skills, but need to improve and practice their spoken and written English.

The Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA) have consulted with different communities regarding the AMEP. The feedback found the 510 hours provided for the AMEP is not sufficient to reach a satisfactory level of English. FECCA's consultation notes some AMEP students still struggle with their English language skills after they have finished their AMEP classes.

2. According to feedback from ECCV members, particularly those from new and emerging communities, difficulty attending classes was raised. Transportation problems or parental responsibility, make it difficult to attend classes regularly. For many new migrants and humanitarian entrants, it is difficult to arrange child care so that they can attend classes. This affects their attendance, leading to poor learning outcomes and further social isolation.

3. Feedback received from AMEP students indicates a perception that AMEP lacks proper resources. This may affect the quality of teaching and educational resources. This negatively affects educational and employment pathways for new migrants and humanitarian entrants wanting to improve.

ECCV recommends that additional resources be provided to improve teachers training and professional development for volunteers involved in English language tuition in classroom-based, distance learning, home tutor schemes and self-paced e-learning.

**Recommendation 1**

That the AMEP be more flexible in delivery of English language classes, catering to the needs of individual student.

**Recommendation 2**

That further resources be provided to the AMEP to ensure better trained teachers and delivery of professional development to volunteers to improve the standard and quality of English language teaching.

**How effective is the AMEP in contributing to settlement and employment outcomes?**

4. ECCV believes that the AMEP does contribute to better outcomes to settlement indicators. It is a well established fact that new migrants are likely to increase their social participation and achieve financial independence as they improve their English language skills.
5. Effective employment pathways after English language tuition are important for people from culturally diverse backgrounds. ECCV feedback indicates that many permanent residents from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds are unemployed or underemployed after completing their AMEP English courses. In particular some professional spouses from predominantly non-English speaking countries, who migrate to Australia to join their partners, have been advised in their English classes that recognition of their overseas qualification would be cumbersome or nearly impossible.

For example a woman from Cambodia with a General Practitioner medical qualification was advised to retrain as a child care assistant or complete an aged care Certificate course as a pathway to employment. ECCV believes such a professional person would better serve the Australian economy by being directed into a medical research job that is more closely related to her tertiary medical qualification and skills.

**Recommendation 3**

That the AMEP provides dedicated officers or careers counsellors to support customised employment pathways.

**Some AMEP clients go on to receive training under the SEE Programme – how could these two programs better work together?**

6. ECCV community consultation (ECCV Work Solutions discussion paper 2013) on the recognition of overseas skills and qualifications found that the process is complex and confusing. There is a lack of customised support that directs newly arrived people from culturally diverse backgrounds into English language, further education and effective job search. The AMEP client is often left frustrated and even

depressed and at the same time the Australian economy is missing out on productive workforce participants.

7. ECCV believes that AMEP clients learn English so that they can find a job. Effective and customised employment pathways need to be designed to suit their skills and qualifications.
8. ECCV believes that the AMEP in collaboration with the SEE program should better cater for skilled people with professional qualifications rather than directing them to certificate courses in child and aged care.

**Recommendation 4**

That the AMEP is adequately resourced to provide individually customised support to ensure that their clients are job ready and to place them in the right jobs.

**Recommendation 5**

That the SEE Program broaden its focus on eligible job seekers who have difficulty finding employment to extend beyond those with low literacy and numeracy skills and also include newly arrived entrants from culturally diverse backgrounds with professional qualifications.

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