



**ethnic
communities'
council of
victoria**

A Distinctive Multicultural Melbourne

**ECCV submission
to the
Metropolitan Planning
Strategy:
Melbourne, let's talk
about the future**

March 2013

The Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria Inc. (ECCV) is the peak body for ethnic and multicultural organisations in Victoria. It is a community based, member driven organisation committed to empowering people from diverse multicultural backgrounds. We are proud to have been the key advocate for culturally diverse communities in Victoria since 1974. For over 35 years we have been the link between multicultural communities, government and the wider community.

The organisation advocates and lobbies all levels of government on behalf of multicultural communities in areas like human rights, access and equity, improving services, racism and discrimination, community harmony, employment, education and training, health and community services, disability, child protection law and justice, and arts and culture.

ECCV helps build the capacity of new and emerging communities and develop policy on a wide range of issues including undertaking original research often in collaboration with major tertiary institutions.

ECCV has been a key player in building Victoria as a successful, harmonious and multicultural society

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Executive Summary

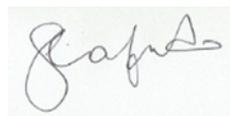
Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria (ECCV) welcomes the *Melbourne, let's talk about the future* project undertaken by the Victorian Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD). We appreciate the opportunity to participate in the Metropolitan Planning Strategy for the next 40 years on behalf of Victoria's multicultural population.

This is a rare opportunity for ECCV to have input to this important project. Our population is growing. Our roads are crowded. Public transport doesn't get us everywhere. Jobs are changing from manufacturing to a growing service industry. The suburbs keep spreading out further.

Victoria is the most culturally diverse state in Australia and most of our former refugees and migrants are increasingly living in cities. The Discussion Paper: *Melbourne, let's talk about the future* gives us some planning suggestions for a distinctive Melbourne. ECCV would like to see a distinctive multicultural Melbourne.

A 20 minute city where people can live, work, do business and visit within a 20 minute radius seems attractive but how inclusive will it be of people from culturally diverse backgrounds. New employment clusters is another positive idea. How will that include opportunities for people from migrant and refugee backgrounds? I believe it is our responsibility to make sure that the Melbourne Planning Strategy for the next 40 to 50 years accounts for jobs for people from refugee and migrant backgrounds; affordable housing for new and emerging in communities; and the wellbeing of older people from non-English speaking backgrounds.

I express my appreciation to the participants that attended the ECCV roundtable conversation to raise so many important issues. I am sure there are many more issues that will surely be raised in the coming years. Of major importance is the fact that representatives from ethnic and multicultural groups have had the opportunity to put forward their views to the Metropolitan Melbourne Strategy. I commend this submission to the Victorian Government.



Joe Caputo OAM, JP
Chairperson

ECCV Roundtable Consultation

This submission addresses key issues raised at the conversation roundtable conducted by ECCV on 4 March 2013 in Carlton. The consultation participants represented a diverse range of groups that included large and small ethno-specific organisations, long-term established migration groups as well as more recent arrivals; culturally diverse youth, seniors and women; culturally diverse health care interests; multi-faith groups; members of the ECCV Workforce Participation Policy Committee; the ECCV Health Policy Committee; the ECCV Drug Taskforce; and retired people from culturally diverse backgrounds.

The Discussion Paper at a Glance

As suggested in the DPCD *Conversation Toolkit Guide*, the participants discussed the each of the nine principles that inform the Metropolitan Planning Strategy in its Discussion Paper. These are:

What we want to achieve

- Principle 1: A distinctive Melbourne
- Principle 2: A globally connected and competitive city
- Principle 3: Social and economic participation
- Principle 4: Strong communities
- Principle 5: Environmental resilience

What needs to change

- Principle 6: A polycentric city linked to regional cities
- Principle 7: Living locally – a ‘20 minute’ city

Making it happen

- Principle 8: Infrastructure investment that supports city growth
- Principle 9: Leadership and partnership

The ECCV consultation findings in the following section are presented according to the *Conversation Toolkit Workbook*.

What do we want to achieve

Question 1. What do you think of these outcome principles?

The ECCV consultation indicated general support for the first five *outcome* principles. ECCV believes, however the principles do not adequately reflect the multicultural reality of Victoria.

ECCV notes that Victoria has a growing multicultural population. About 45 per cent of the Victorian population were born overseas or have at least one parent born overseas originating from more than 230 countries, representing 120 religions and speaking as many as 200 languages other than English (VMC, 2011 Census).

Victoria's population of older people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds is growing faster than for other older Australians. About 30 per cent of people over 65 are from a culturally diverse background.

Participants felt it would have been good to see a statement of principles that embody inclusive ideas such as access, equity, fairness and participation to better realise the 40 year vision.

Participants overwhelmingly indicated that an effective future Strategy to make metropolitan Melbourne into a more liveable place requires a strong focus on culturally responsive health and social services as well as environmental infrastructure issues. ECCV acknowledges that issues relating to the landscape, environmental works, buildings and traffic are important. ECCV believes that the wellbeing needs of the people of Melbourne come first. ECCV asserts therefore, that the development of culturally responsive social and health care services for the wellbeing of Victorians from culturally, linguistically and spiritually diverse backgrounds, are of key importance in planning for the next 40 years.

ECCV and Victoria's ethnic and multicultural community service sector are well networked. They have played a vital role in the provision of social and health support for people from culturally diverse backgrounds for many decades. They have an in-depth understanding of the diversity and the complexities of Melbourne's multicultural residents. ECCV believes the multicultural community sector has much knowledge and expertise to offer the Melbourne Planning Strategy team in terms of future innovation, intricate details of services and visionary thinking.

Recommendation 1

ECCV recommends that the Ministerial Advisory Committee overseeing the development of the Metropolitan Planning Strategy includes culturally diverse leadership representation to provide advice and direction that reflects Victoria's growing multicultural population.

Recommendation 2

ECCV recommends that the Victorian Government includes a Cultural Diversity Strategy as part of the Metropolitan Planning Strategy to provide advice and direction on issues relating to the development of culturally responsive health and social support to better reflect the needs of Victoria's diverse population.

Participants noted that the Discussion Paper was only made available in English and in doing so excluded every third or fourth Victorian.

Recommendation 3

ECCV recommends an extension on submission due dates and that DPCD provides at the least a translated summary in languages other than English and made accessible for input from non-English speaking communities via SBS and ethnic media.

Question 2. What do you think is needed to achieve these outcome principles?

ECCV advocates for outcome principles that better reflect Victoria's cultural diversity as follows:

- A distinctive multicultural Melbourne (Principle 1)
- A globally connected and competitive city that welcomes migrants and refugees (Principle 2)
- Equitable social and economic participation for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (Principle 3)
- Strong communities that are inclusive of people from a culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (Principle 4)
- Environmental resilience that reflects the environmentally sustainable contribution of Victorians from culturally diverse backgrounds. (Principle 5)

ECCV would like to see a Strategy on how the government better provides services to the new and emerging communities; how it will we avoid racial discrimination in the process and to enhance multicultural community engagement.

ECCV supports the notion of building an expanded Central City that can attract new jobs with Melbourne as a world city and tourism hub. ECCV believes expanding the opportunities for residents, businesses and visitors requires greater social connectedness with a strong focus on cultural diversity. Participants felt it was important that the Melbourne Planning Committee should include representatives from a culturally diverse background to voice the views of multicultural Victoria.

ECCV supports the vision of Melbourne as an international city to attract overseas investment and in turn create quality employment opportunities. ECCV asserts that a globally connected city needs to actively welcome skilled migration and refugees as well as a truly inclusive and culturally diverse workforce.

Participants noted that a distinctive multicultural city needs to welcome refugees and migrants. It recalled that the 1960s migration waves made Melbourne what it is today enriched cultural precincts around inner Melbourne.

ECCV found that people are increasingly being pushed away from each other into social isolation. Cultural hubs are needed to bring people closer together utilising models such as Migrant Resource Centres and Neighbourhood Houses. If the richness of our communities is not properly valued, this is an opportunity missed. In some ways it appears that things are going backwards. There is a need to overcome exclusion in local areas, especially regarding community housing estates. The example of Carlton was offered with very little representation of people from new and emerging communities on local committees despite the big population in the area.

Participants felt it is crucial to include issues around employment, housing, health and developing a healthy sustaining city in the Strategy. These are social determinants of health, as are culture and ethnicity.

Recommendation 4

ECCV recommends planning focus on a distinctive multicultural Melbourne.

Recommendation 5

ECCV recommends more multicultural community hubs around metropolitan Melbourne.

Recommendation 6

ECCV recommends actively welcoming the skilled migration program and refugees into a truly inclusive and culturally diverse workforce.

What needs to change**Question 3. What are the key ingredients for success in achieving the vision of an expanded Central City?**

ECCV welcomes suburban job clusters that are nationally significant places of economic activity and innovation to boost productivity, support economic growth, make the most of infrastructure, and promote urban renewal.

ECCV believes that unlocking the capacity of suburbs needs 'local solutions' provided to 'local problems' by 'local communities'. In terms of education there needs to be a better response to local multiculturalism. ECCV upholds the inclusive work of the Moreland City Council as providing a culturally responsive communication best practice models called CALDCOM.

Participants noted that many planners are talking about the need to restore the 'village model' which could be a good response to this. ECCV notes there are increasingly new concentrations of people from new and emerging communities and refugees settling in the outer suburbs. They need places to meet.

ECCV asserts that an expanding city needs jobs in the suburbs for people from culturally diverse and refugee backgrounds. In particular the government needs to provide resources for training people from predominantly non-English speaking countries for jobs in the expanding knowledge and services sector, especially since the manufacturing sector is declining.

Recommendation 7

ECCV recommends adequate resources and facilities for people from culturally diverse backgrounds to access suburban job clusters such as:

- Free and universal education and training for people from culturally diverse backgrounds
- Recognition of the contribution of older people from culturally diverse backgrounds
- Improved public transport in the outer suburbs
- Public places to socialise and meet

Question 4. What do you think of the idea of identifying and reinforcing employment and innovation clusters across Melbourne?

ECCV believes successful employment clusters across Melbourne depend on better education of the young people from non-English speaking backgrounds; and for newly arrived and socially disadvantaged people from culturally diverse backgrounds with limited work experience.

There is a need for funded hubs to identify needs of culturally diverse women, young people and older people.

ECCV believes that for innovation clusters across Melbourne to succeed the government needs to take jobs there, influence industry to employ people from culturally diverse backgrounds, provide adequate transport and create affordable housing.

ECCV believes that it is not possible to achieve economic and employment clusters without social opportunities and that a lot more effort needs to go into community building for people from diverse backgrounds.

Recommendation 8

ECCV recommends greater access to skills based education and workplace training for people from migrant and refugee backgrounds across Melbourne.

Recommendation 9

ECCV recommends greater opportunities for social connectedness and community engagement for people from culturally diverse backgrounds across Melbourne.

Question 5. What is needed to support growth and development in regional cities?

ECCV believes the role of multicultural committees and councils, in particular the regional VMC Commissioners of the VMC (Victorian Multicultural Commission), are invaluable in supporting the growth in regional cities. This would build recognition in communities and in local government with regard to migrant groups and provide appropriate advocacy on multicultural issues. ECCV would like to see the feedback of the VMC regional consultants taken up more systematically across government departments.

ECCV notes the important role of regional ECCs (Ethnic Communities' Councils) in identifying pertinent issues, finding local culturally responsive solutions and establishing good multicultural networks.

Participants indicated that aged culturally diverse populations in regional areas often experience isolation as members of their cultural community become less numerous. There is a lack of services that are responsive to their language and cultural needs.

Participants noted a dearth of appropriate language services in such areas. There needs to be strong support for the development of local community groups that are multicultural, or ethno-specific and grassroots based. This is particularly important for the settlement, language and skill development of people from migrant and refugee backgrounds. Understanding those issues would better integrate metropolitan Melbourne with regional Victoria.

Recommendation 10

ECCV recommends that communities in regional Victoria be provided with language services, and culturally responsive social support and health provision.

Recommendation 11

ECCV recommends that the regional Commissioners of the VMC and regional ECC representatives are better recognised for their crucial role in regional consultations and become key partners of the future in the Metropolitan Planning Strategy.

Question 6. What do you think of the idea of a '20 minute city'?

Participants overwhelmingly supported the idea of a 20 minute city with accessible, safe and attractive local areas where people can meet most of their needs. ECCV believes to ensure that the 20 minute city is not too idealistic for Melbourne's increasingly multicultural population to live, to work, do business, and visit locally, four key elements are required:

- affordable housing with a diversity of design

- a huge transformation of the public transport system
- more jobs in the outer suburbs
- improved access to culturally responsive services

Recommendation 12

ECCV recommends bi-partisan support at State and Federal level for long-term, decision making and planning with input from multicultural representatives.

Recommendation 13

ECCV recommends a strengthened focus on skills development for young people from new and emerging communities in local suburbs.

Recommendation 14

ECCV recommends that residential and care facilities for people with asged care, mental health and disability needs be located conveniently and within easy access in both the inner city and outer suburban areas; and that they cater for people from culturally diverse backgrounds.

Question 7. How can established suburbs accommodate the needs of changing populations and maintain what people value about their area?

ECCV believes there is a need to promote diversity in design and urban development within local government. This could be addressed through community development in the design of housing to provide a range of both expensive and more affordable housing options within the same local areas, rather than the two-class system that appears to be emerging around Melbourne.

ECCV believes Melbourne needs a fairer distribution of resources. Many culturally diverse and spiritually diverse community members are unable to live in community clusters due to unaffordable and rising housing prices in certain areas. This causes exclusion and isolation, as people cannot be with their ethnic communities.

Many people from culturally and spiritually diverse background have strong social, cultural and identity needs to live close to their ethnic and multi-faith centres. Gentrification of some inner suburbs and skyrocketing of house prices makes it difficult for some young culturally diverse families and more recent arrivals to live in their preferred suburbs. To avoid the risk of social isolation and loss of cultural and religious identity it is crucial to provide a range of housing options within a single local government area.

Practical infrastructure suggestions included:

- Encouraging public service and businesses to stagger times of start and finishing work and options of not working every day
- More accessible public transport based on other cities such as transport models in Canada
- Bus lanes in the middle of highways
- Above ground railway overpasses and underpasses
- Retraining the workforce to fit the knowledge and service sectors
- More facilities with amenities for people living in the flats
- More meeting spaces for culturally diverse leisure activities, community building and community participation

Diagram 1 below shows suggested pictorial depiction of a road layout design that optimises meetings places. The preferred model is one where roads meet at a central meeting place rather than a grid of parallel roads.

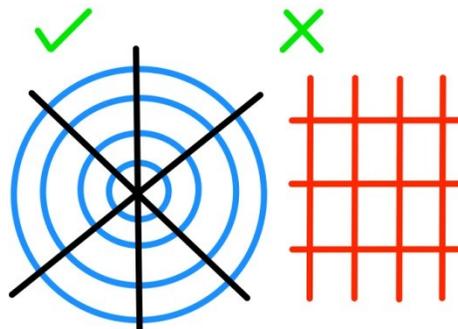


Diagram 1: Preferred road layout with central meeting place

Recommendation 15

ECCV recommends affordable and diverse housing to minimise socioeconomic differences between localities.

Recommendation 16

ECCV recommends increased opportunity for leisure activities that connect multicultural youth with each other across ethnic groups.

Question 8. How do we ensure a healthy and sustainable environment for future generations?

Participants overwhelmingly supported more trees, greenery and attractive tree-lined boulevards. ECCV highlights the superior horticultural skills of former migrants and refugees; their outstanding market gardening skills; and in particular the special talent in sustainable living of former refugees, learnt through necessity for survival. These extraordinary skills need to be recognised and developed. We can all benefit from them. ECCV believes work projects such as community gardens would also help people from overseas to put down their own roots and to build their capacity as well as create a greener environment.

Participants expressed the need to account for global warming impact by maximising the benefits of wind and sun energy. They further indicated the need for real energy of the future to be accessible to Melbourne's most vulnerable groups such as people from emerging communities.

Recommendation 17

ECCV recommends making solar panels more unaffordable to people from new and emerging communities.

Recommendation 18

ECCV recommends tapping into the horticultural and sustainable living talents of people from cultural diversity backgrounds.

Recommendation 19

ECCV recommends opening up public spaces in the suburbs for planting fruit trees and gardens.

Making it happen

Question 9. What do you think about the possible ways of funding infrastructure?

ECCV acknowledges the need to consider big ticket items such as the cost of major infrastructure investment to create new jobs, housing choices and new open spaces.

Participants commented that there are huge areas of unused space in Melbourne which could be put to housing, community groups and other uses. They felt there is a need to consider the mental health impacts of lacking access to resources and to invest properly in this to avoid future cost. Multicultural meeting places are needed to overcome social isolation.

Participants opposed the user-pays funding approach. They felt such a system depends on local commitment and a sense of belonging. As long as there is insufficient community engagement with

people from culturally diverse backgrounds such a funding system would not work. ECCV believes there is a need a different approach such as building local communities as well as partnerships of public and private housing. Culturally diverse communities that are impacted on should be involved in having a say about Melbourne's vast areas of unused land and properties.

Recommendation 20

ECCV recommends additional future opportunities for people from migrant and refugee backgrounds to explore innovative approaches to unused land and properties within the framework of building local communities.

Question 10. How can all levels of government, business and community work together to create the city you want?

Participants felt all Melbournians need to share the responsibility to create the city they want. A partnership approach is vital. Cooperation is needed between all levels of government. Ethnic communities should be involved as this is about people and community development. Collaboration is vital therefore a commitment to and resourcing of the engaging of culturally diverse communities is required.

Participants had good reason for concern around housing access for young people and students from culturally diverse backgrounds. Well planned high-density living has a place in Melbourne.

Participants expressed considerable concern about the future of culturally diverse families and communities with particular reference to the next generation. The question arose: where do they fit into this future plan? They are raised as bilingual and bicultural; but do not have many opportunities to celebrate their dual cultural skills. They are raised as 'world kids' but see little prospect for local involvement would be culturally relevant. ECCV sees such future skills as potential talent for recruitment in future settlement and multicultural projects.

Recommendation 21

ECCV recommends that the State and Federal Governments play a strong leadership role for local government to provide settlement and multicultural programs in the future.

Other comments, feedback or ideas about the themes in the Discussion Paper

Participants shared a concern about Melbourne developing into 'two city model', where there are very liveable areas alongside less liveable areas with limited access to resources to avoid the risk of 'poverty pockets'.

ECCV believes there is a need to address the equity of those two areas as they are two different areas of liveability emerging that not just geographical differences but also socio-economic.

In summary participants expressed the need for:

- An increase in competition and business incentive for the development of decentralised hub where smaller culturally diverse businesses can survive and prosper.
- More flexible loans for former refugees
- More flexible approaches to green spaces that have traditionally been so sacred that they did not allow for cafes. More population density and a pleasant cafe society would attract people from culturally diverse backgrounds to outlying open spaces.
- A better transport system such as faster bullet trains with a better geographic spread
- Communities of new housing designs for example with no street access to maximise green spaces.

Recommendation 22

ECCV recommends more flexible loans for business start-ups and to ensure access for people from culturally diverse communities have access to adequate resources.

Recommendation 23

ECCV recommends that untouched green spaces become community meeting places with small local business enterprises.

Recommendation 24

ECCV recommends that communities be better connected through faster and better organised public transport including a rail-link to the Tullamarine Airport.

ECCV advocates a focus on people from culturally diverse backgrounds rather than just buildings, street plans and open spaces, would create a distinctive multicultural Melbourne that reflect the reality of Victoria's population. In this way Melbourne would be transformed from being a nice place to live, to a great liveable city over the next 40 years.

For more information contact Dr Irene Bouzo, Senior Policy Officer at email ibouzo@eccv.org.au and telephone 03 9349 4122