



**Submission to FECCA:
Consultation Transcript
on the
Allocation of Aged Care Service Improvement
and Healthy Ageing Grants by the Department of Social Services**

February 2015

About ECCV

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.

Key message

ECCV is concerned that the allocation of Aged Care Service Improvement and Healthy Ageing Grants (ACSIHAG) by the Department of Social Services (DSS) further disadvantages older people from non-English speaking and culturally diverse backgrounds in receiving culturally and linguistically responsive aged care services.

Introduction

The following is a summary transcript of ECCV's consultations with ethno-specific and multicultural aged care organisations in Victoria. It summarises the concerns raised by the sector in response to the round of ACSIHAG funding in late-2014. It has a specific focus on the impending discontinuation of Federal Government funding for the Community Partners Program (CPP), which since 2005 has been particularly successful in enhancing access and equity to aged care related information and services for culturally and linguistically diverse communities. It also raises the sector's concerns in relation to the allocation of funding for time limited projects under DSS's new competitive tendering process.

Human rights

ECCV highlights that equitable access to culturally and linguistically appropriate aged care and culturally appropriate aged care related information is a basic human right. Almost a third of Victorians aged 65 and over are migrants from multicultural backgrounds and they deserve the right to age well.

Transcript of consultations with ethno-specific and multicultural organisations

1. Organisations were informed in late-December 2014 that funding for the CPP will not be renewed when the three year agreement ends in June 2015. The following is a list of the main questions and issues raised by ethno-specific and multicultural organisations in relation to this impending change:

- That there was a lack of consultation from DSS about the discontinuation of funding from 30 June 2015.
- That there was a lack of transparency in the selection process and a lack of succession planning for this longstanding program; some organisations have been funded since 2005.
- That the failure to guarantee CPP funding demonstrates a lack of recognition for the importance of services specialising in culturally responsive care.
- That the future funding landscape provides significant challenges for small ethno-specific and multicultural organisations.
- Concerns have been raised about DSS funding patterns, which appear to have given preference to larger, generic organisations that may not have better practice or relevant expertise in providing culturally responsive care. (i.e. why were certain organisations successful in securing CPP funding after June 2015 while others were not?)
- Will the CPP program be delivered by different organisations after June 2015?
- Is the CPP program going to be replaced or will it be discontinued?
- Are there structures in place that will enable the Aged Care sector to continue being responsive and inclusive towards older people from non-English speaking and culturally diverse backgrounds?
- That there has been a sense of contradiction in the state office's feedback and the final grant results from DSS:

Example

- Senior personnel from DSS Victoria Branch had visited an ethno-specific and multicultural organisation's CPP workers and the CPP's generic partner's residential facilities, and provided positive feedback based on the observed outcomes from the organisation's ethno-specific program.
- With little explanation from DSS's central grant office, the organisation was informed that they had not been successful in the ACSIHAG grant application and that their CPP funding would not be renewed after June 2015.

2. The following is a summary of the anticipated consequences of the discontinuation of the Community Partners Programs (CPP) as raised by ethno-specific and multicultural organisations:

- That expertise, working knowledge and creative initiatives will be lost.
- That community development engagement, efforts and positive outcome with local community members will be lost.

Example

- Along with the support from the residential facility and community members, a CPP worker coordinated an all-day event in a generic residential facility where food stalls with various cultural themes were set up.

- Management and workers in the facility explored new opportunities to engage with the culturally and linguistically diverse population within their local area, as well as ways to provide culturally responsive meals.
 - Community members actively participated in the day event and learnt about healthy, active ageing, and gained more understanding about aged care services through visiting the residential aged care facility.
- That intellectual property and resources developed through CPP will be lost.
 - That longstanding and well established localised networks with generic aged care providers and community members will be lost.
 - That positive outcomes through localised partnerships and ongoing capacity building with generic aged care providers will be lost:

Example

- Some CPP programs have setup localised networks and consolidated these networks with other generic service providers.
 - Such localised networks have been raising cultural awareness and enhancing culturally responsive aged care.
- The CPP has been vital in providing access to aged care related information and aged care services for older people from non-English speaking and culturally diverse backgrounds. Since Australia's aged care system is going through some rapid and significant changes, the loss of the CPP will likely exacerbate existing disadvantages and inequities faced by older people from non-English speaking and culturally diverse backgrounds:

Example

- The CPP is has been disseminating important information and educating older people from non-English speaking and culturally diverse backgrounds about Aged care reform and the changes in the aged care system.
- Through the CPP consumers are made aware of the changes that may affect them. (i.e. Home Care Packages and Consumer Directed Care) and informed about their rights and responsibilities.
- The CPP has been preparing older people from non-English speaking and culturally diverse backgrounds and their carers in relation to their aged care needs.
- The CPP has been promoting active and healthy ageing.

For the Department of Health and Ageing's 2007 budget statement outlining The CPP:

[http://www.health.gov.au/internet/budget/publishing.nsf/Content/48B561410336D30ACA257CA0003FF3FC/\\$File/afact17.pdf](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/budget/publishing.nsf/Content/48B561410336D30ACA257CA0003FF3FC/$File/afact17.pdf)

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