



FUNDING BOOST FOR VICTORIAN LANGUAGE SERVICES WELCOMED

Wednesday June 27th, 2018

Minister for Multicultural Affairs Robin Scott has recently announced a significant funding increase for interpreter services in Victoria. Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria (ECCV) Chairperson Cr Kris Pavlidis welcomes this injection of funding towards support of the Interpreting profession.

Equitable access and services information is vital for all Victorians, including those from culturally diverse backgrounds. Yet low English proficiency and a lack of knowledge about services within multicultural communities continue to lead to poorer health access to services compared to other communities.

Victorians whose first language is not English will continue to be left behind by health providers as long as there is cultural insensitivity towards the impacts of communication.

The use of accredited interpreters decreases the risk of miscommunication between service providers and consumers. "This funding addresses the fundamental right of all people regardless of their linguistic affiliation, to be heard with dignity and respect" said Cr Kris Pavlidis.

In March 2017 ECCV published a discussion paper '*Our Stories, Our Voices: Culturally diverse consumer perspectives on the role of accredited interpreters in Victoria's health services*'. This paper recommends that all Victorian public health service providers need to ensure that culturally diverse Victorians who access their health services know their rights to access accredited interpreters, to clear communication, safety, respect, privacy and confidentiality and the right to give feedback and have their concerns addressed.

Minister Scott says "All Victorians have a right to access government services, regardless of their English language skills. Interpreters are vital to enabling this access. With Victoria's increasing cultural diversity, interpreters have never been more important. It is essential that we ensure a professional, high-quality language services industry to meet the needs of Victorians".

Cr Kris Pavlidis says she concurs with Minister Scott's sentiment that it is crucial to help facilitate "a voice for those who would otherwise remain silent".

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