

9 March 2018

The Hon Dan Tehan MP  
Minister for Social Services  
PO Box 6022  
House of Representatives, Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600  
Email: [dan.tehan.mp@aph.gov.au](mailto:dan.tehan.mp@aph.gov.au)

Dear Minister

**Re: Social Services Legislation Amendment (Encouraging Self-sufficiency for Newly Arrived Migrants) Bill 2018**

The Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria (ECCV) is the peak advocacy body for over 240 members representing ethnic and multicultural organisations, and is the voice of multicultural Victoria.

ECCV has serious concerns about the likely effects of the Social Services Legislation Amendment (Encouraging Self-sufficiency for Newly Arrived Migrants) Bill 2018 that is currently before Parliament. By proposing to increase the Newly Arrived Resident's Waiting Period (NARWP) from two years to three years, the Bill will further increase the amount of time that many new migrants have to wait before they can access social security. ECCV believes that this would considerably increase the risk of financial hardship and isolation of migrants living in the Australian community.

While the exemptions provided by the Bill for refugees and in other limited cases are essential to ensuring adequate support for these particular groups, ECCV believes that many new migrants will be at risk of significant hardship if required to wait an additional year until they are able to access the social security benefits. Newly-arrived residents are as vulnerable (if not more) as any other Australians to changes of circumstance such as family breakdown, loss of employment or housing insecurity. As a result, the change of the waiting period could potentially lead to extreme hardship for individuals who find themselves in unforeseen difficulties.

ECCV urges that this Bill be reconsidered, particularly given the potential risks that this change would entail to new migrants at a crucial stage of their settlement process.

For further information, please contact James Houghton, ECCV Policy Officer, on (03) 9354 9555 or [jhoughton@eccv.org.au](mailto:jhoughton@eccv.org.au).

Sincerely



Kris Pavlidis  
Chairperson