



ETHNIC COMMUNITIES' COUNCIL OF VICTORIA

*voices* of multicultural  
Victoria

- MEDIA RELEASE -

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**ECCV WELCOMES ROYAL COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDATIONS FOR  
MORE CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES**

The Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria has welcomed the release of today's report from the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System, saying its recommendations will provide a much-needed path to a more culturally responsive, respectful and equitable approach to mental health.

"The Royal Commission has identified major failings in our mental health system and provided a blueprint for transformation," said Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria Chair, Eddie Micallef. "We are pleased that the Royal Commission has recognised that mental health services remain unresponsive to the needs of our diverse community," Mr Micallef said.

"We welcome the recognition of the negative impacts of discrimination, racism and stigma on mental health, and the need to address institutional discrimination," said Mr Micallef.

"Migrant and refugee communities have been missing out on the support they need, which too often results in avoidable suffering.

"The Commission's recommendations for stronger accountability, representation, and partnerships with community organisations will lead to improved outcomes for Victoria's migrant and refugee communities," he said.

Mr Micallef said the COVID-19 pandemic has seen a surge in mental health concerns reported to multicultural and ethnic community organisations.

"We know from the experience during the pandemic that the pre-existing failings of the system have meant that it has been unable to respond to this crisis.

"As our society is becoming more diverse, our service systems need to adapt to respond adequately to ensure that mental health support is culturally responsive to the needs of everyone in our community," he said.

“The mental health workforce needs to reflect the diversity of our community, and all people with lived experience should be represented at the decision-making table,” Mr Micallef said. “Our communities need to be resourced to respond appropriately when someone is in distress or has a mental health condition,” he said.

“We look forward to working with the Victorian Government to implement the important reforms recommended by the Royal Commission,” Mr Micallef said.

“We hope there is a bipartisan approach from the Victorian Parliament to support the change we need.”

ECCV has been working with Victorian Transcultural Mental Health (VTMH) to develop strategic recommendations for the Department of Health for how the Victorian mental health system can become more culturally responsive to meet the needs of migrant and refugee communities, and offer opportunities to talk about mental health, build mutual support and connect people with services.

“Culture plays a significant role in how people experience their mental health and also shapes mental health practice and how services are structured and organised,” said VTMH Manager, Dr Anita Tan.

“Mental health concerns become mental health risks when people’s needs are not recognised and responded to in culturally responsive ways,” she said.

“Our service systems must be able to provide care to all members of the community, recognising that identities are interconnected, carry stories and carry history. This entails prioritising the principles of access, equity and inclusion in the delivery of health services. This includes through meaningful engagement with migrant and refugee communities, and partnerships with workforces that enable critical reflection and application of culture-oriented principles and practices within local contexts,” Ms Tan said.

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