

Digital Inclusion of Multicultural Seniors



Seniors often depend on family members and friends, and service provider staff, to help navigate information and services that are available on Government or service provider websites.

ECCV community feedback

This position paper provides a brief overview on issues related to digital inclusion in the context of Victoria's multicultural ageing population. ECCV identified that improved access to digital inclusion is key for the social participation and healthy ageing of older people of culturally and linguistically diverse background. ECCV recognises the work of the Australian Department of Social Services and the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services in working towards improved digital literacy of seniors.

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION AND ITS IMPACT ON SENIORS

- The increasing use of digital technology in everyday life activities and commercial transactions has been transforming Australia and global society.
- Digital communication amongst people and organisations has intensified and accelerated.
- Australian business and Government client service transactions are nowadays mainly undertaken via digital and telephone communication.
- A number of daily transactions require computer or digital skills, e.g. banking, paying bills, and digital communication.
- Digitalisation has also significantly impacted on the Australian aged care sector and culturally diverse seniors¹.
- Often culturally diverse seniors find it difficult to navigate and access services provided primarily online.
- Examples of the digitalisation of Government services in Victoria are *MyCAV* and *Services Victoria* and nationally *MyAgedCare* and *Centrelink*.
- *MyCAV* is the central online system of Consumer Affairs Victoria through which incorporated associations manage their reporting obligations.
- In order to lodge annual statements on *MyCAV*, culturally diverse seniors' groups are required to be digitally literate.

- Many people, including culturally diverse older citizens feel left out as a result of the increased digitalisation of society.
- Today's younger people are increasingly growing up with digital technology and communication. This contrasts greatly with people who are required to learn this in older age.
- ECCV and Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA) consultations have confirmed that culturally diverse seniors find it often difficult to access online servicesⁱⁱ.

ECCV DIGITAL LITERACY PROJECT AND ITS FINDINGS

- ECCV has worked in partnership with the [Good Things Foundation](#) to build the capacity of multicultural organisations and communities to improve people's digital literacy skills.
- ECCV is currently working with a number of ethnic and multicultural senior citizens clubs and service providers.
- Culturally diverse seniors who participate in this project have valued this opportunity to enhance their digital literacy skills.
- Culturally diverse seniors have at times felt overwhelmed by digital technology and the plethora of information linked to its learning.
- Culturally diverse seniors have expressed their preference for one-to-one and in-language learning supportⁱⁱⁱ.
- ECCV has recommended to the Good Things Foundation the development of a bilingual volunteers training model to better support culturally diverse seniors' groups to learn about digital technology.

ECCV commends the Federal Government funded 'Speak My Language' project as a best practice example that facilitates better access of multicultural communities to the MyAgedCare portal via ethnic radio podcasts.

STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE DIGITAL INCLUSION

- ECCV believes that innovative programs in partnership between Ethnic Communities' Councils and Adult Learning providers need to be established to improve access and equity of Government services which are provided primarily online^{iv}.
- ECCV applauds ethno-specific agencies which facilitate intergenerational technology education programs for seniors.
- A best practice example is 'Tech, Tea, and Tales' of JewishCare, a project that combines storytelling with learning about technology^v.
- ECCV advocates for more bilingual mentor and volunteer programs to help improve the digital literacy of seniors.

- ECCV invites State and Federal Governments to set digital inclusion targets to ensure access and equity of Government services.
- ECCV suggests the implementation of digital inclusion standards of Government service delivery to measure their accessibility by vulnerable people.
- ECCV recommends that State and Federal Government subsidised support services should all be in-part promoted through ethnic and multicultural media outlets.
- ECCV advocates for the enhancement of face- to-face engagement and information of Government subsidised services to culturally diverse seniors preferably in language.
- ECCV recommends the State Government increase investment in digital literacy training for senior Victorians, including tailored bi-lingual training programs for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

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References

- ⁱ Irene Bouzo, 2016, The Essentials of Customer Experience in Ageing Well After Migration, in FECCA Australian Mosaic, Autumn 2016, Improving the Healthy Ageing Experience for older CALD Australians, available on <http://fecca.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/FECCA-Mosaic-43.pdf>
- ⁱⁱ FECCA- ECCV Aged Care consultations 2014-15, available on <http://fecca.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/FECCA-and-ECCV-Aged-Care-Consultations-2014-15.pdf>.
- ⁱⁱⁱ ECCV 2018, Be Connected 2018 internal project progress report
- ^{iv} FECCA, 2016, Digital Equity and Access for Multicultural Communities, available on <http://fecca.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/feccadigitalconsultationreport.pdf>
- ^v Kirsten Young, 2018, Tech, Tea & Tales, in ECCV Golden Years Magazine, Issue 130 – 2018, Intergenerational Relationships, available at: http://www.w3productions.com.au/clients/eccv/eccvmag_130.html.