

Multicultural Access and Equity: **Strengthening connections between communities and services**

Perspectives on accessing Australian Government services drawn from FECCA's 2012-13 consultations with culturally and linguistically diverse Australians

*Prepared by the Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA) for
the Australian Government Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC)*

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your involvement in our Access and Equity work. And to our partner organisations who gave up their time and provided a space within which to hear from the community, we thank you and look forward to future work together.

About FECCA

FECCA is the national peak body representing and advocating for culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities.

FECCA advocates, develops policy and promote issues on behalf of its constituency to Government, business and the broader community.

FECCA supports multiculturalism, community harmony, social justice, community participation and the rejection of all forms of

discrimination, so as to build a productive and culturally-rich Australian society.

FECCA's policies are designed around the concepts of empowerment and inclusion and are formulated with the common good of all Australians in mind.

FECCA's membership comprises state, territory and regional multicultural and ethnic communities' councils. FECCA has an elected Executive committee and a national secretariat based in Canberra and Sydney.

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Acronyms

ADSi	Auburn Diversity Services Inc.
AHRC	Australian Human Rights Commission
AMEP	Adult Migrant English Program
AMP	Agency Multicultural Plan
BRMC	Ballarat Regional Multicultural Council
CALD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
DEEWR	Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
DIAC	Australian Government Department of Immigration and Citizenship
DHS	Australian Government Department of Human Services
ECC	Ethnic Communities' Council
ECCWA	Ethnic Communities' Council of Western Australia
EOC	Equal Opportunity Commission
ESL	English as a Second Language
FaHCSIA	Australian Government Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs
FECCA	Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia
JETCCFA	Jobs, Education and Training Child Care Fee Assistance
JSA	Jobs Services Australia
JSCI	Job Seeker Classification Instrument
LLNP	Language, Literacy and Numeracy Program
MAGIC	Multicultural Activity Group in Cooma
MC/MCC	Multicultural Council/Multicultural Communities' Councils
MCA	Migration Council Australia
MRC	Migrant Resource Centre
MSO	Multicultural Services Officer
NAATI	National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters Ltd
NEC	New and Emerging Community
NESB	Non-English Speaking Background
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
OHS	Occupational health and safety
RHN	Refugee Health Nurse
SGP	Settlement Grants Program
TIS	Translating and Interpreting Service
WA	Western Australia

Executive Summary

The increasingly multicultural nature of our society, our ageing population and our need for a competitive, strong economy in the Asian century makes Access and Equity more important than ever. Australia needs culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) Australians as much as CALD Australians need equitable access to Government services. The decision to invest in future generations of people who will feel socially included, who will want to participate in our communities, and who will contribute to our economy, is an easy decision for Government to make.

FECCA is pleased to see the Government taking steps to implement such a decision. In late 2011, the Australian Government commissioned an Independent Panel to carry out an inquiry into the existing Access and Equity Strategy and Framework, which reported to Government in June 2012. The Inquiry Panel made a number of recommendations designed to improve CALD Australians' access to Government services. In March 2013, the Australian Government accepted the Panel's recommendations in full which sets in place the updated Framework titled *Multicultural Access and Equity: Respecting Diversity. Improving Responsiveness*. (*Appendix A*). The implementation of this Framework means that Australian Government agencies will be required to have an Agency Multicultural Plan (AMP) by July 2013.

These improvements demonstrate a stated commitment by decision-makers and agencies to ensure that service provision to CALD Australians cannot be an 'extra', or worse, an 'optional extra' in Government policy development and service delivery. It flags the beginning of a shift in thinking towards the recognition that adequate consideration of CALD clients' needs is an essential element of a fair service delivery system.

As FECCA has lobbied for change at the highest levels, FECCA will be monitoring with interest the changes that take place at the coalface of Government service delivery. While the Government committed to a policy of Access and Equity in the late 1970s, FECCA's 2012–13 consultations show that after over 30 years, there is still inequality. There is still a gap between good policy intent and actual service delivery.

A view has been expressed that FECCA should stop reporting on CALD inequality, that it should focus its energies elsewhere (as inequality is rather clearly understood and acknowledged). FECCA is strongly of the opinion that, while CALD Australians experience and report inequality and inaccessibility in Government services, it will continue to speak out. When there is no inequality, when all Australians can access

the Government services that their and their children's taxes pay for, FECCA will be pleased to focus its energies elsewhere.

FECCA's 2012–13 Access and Equity Report details the feedback received from its consultations with CALD communities during 2012–13. It is divided into six sections. The first section details FECCA's consultation methodology for 2012–13. It shows that FECCA was able to engage many more CALD people this year, both in person and via its online survey, than it has for many years. It also details FECCA's focus area of employment and focus demographic of women for the 2012–13 consultations. These focus areas are reflected throughout this report—particularly in Chapter 2 regarding women and in Chapter 3 regarding employment. While FECCA did not receive adequate funding to facilitate professional translation of consultation materials and use of interpreters, the methodology discussion acknowledges that the most effective CALD consultation mechanisms allow participants to contribute in their first language. Chapters 1–5 present the experiences of consultation participants accessing Government services and are structured in order to capture some of the key aspects and expected outcomes of the new Multicultural Access and Equity Framework, including 'effective communication' and 'responsiveness'.

Chapter 1 demonstrates the link between knowledge and power as relates to Government service provision—without knowing about the services available, CALD people cannot use them. It urges Government to ensure (via the relevant agency) that CALD Australians are aware of its services, by providing sufficient information in languages other than English via a variety of formats and by setting up a central access point. Chapter 2 recounts consultation participants' problems accessing Government services—problems that may resonate with other groups of Australians regardless of background, including women, people living in rural areas and people on low incomes. However, Chapter 2 argues that, due to the intersectionality of the challenges facing CALD people, any single problem affecting a wider group of people is likely to cause CALD Australians to experience greater and more complex difficulties—an argument that is reflected in the feedback of consultation participants.



Chapters 3–5 examine the specific challenges faced by CALD Australians. Chapter 3 provides a summary of the consultation feedback showing that there remains significant unmet need in CALD communities. It demonstrates that CALD people face a range of challenges in accessing Government services, especially when looking for work, which other Australians do not experience, and makes a number of practical recommendations to relevant Government agencies to respond to these challenges. Chapter 4 discusses some of the mechanisms through which the Australian Government could and has responded to CALD Australians’ needs—via a client-centred service delivery model, by fostering cultural competency and by developing CALD-specific programs. However, FECCA’s consultations demonstrated that such mechanisms are not always adequate or effective. Chapter 5 examines the avenues available for redress when such mechanisms do not work effectively, from the ability to make an individual complaint to the accountability of service providers to their Government funding bodies.

FECCA reiterates the importance of delivering and taking note of the grassroots feedback it receives from CALD Australians. The final word belongs to a participant at the Auburn consultation, delivered via a translator:

“He said he hopes that you deliver his message to the appropriate department, to take action on it!”

All the things that the people have said in here, it doesn’t mean they are greedy, you know? But you say that Government wants to hear from them to improve the services. What they have said, they want to give the Government an idea about what’s happening here, what’s happening for them, and then the Government should improve their projects, plans and services, if it’s possible. To make a decision about it in the future.

On behalf of the group, they all say, thank you for coming, thank you for providing this opportunity for us to express our opinion and our experiences, and you convey this to the Government and of course it is incumbent on the Government to help us or to improve the services, so we appreciate this. And please pass our best thanks to the Government. It’s a great democracy. It’s a beautiful country.”

Summary of Recommendations

1. Information, knowledge and connecting to and between services 17

FECCA RECOMMENDATION 1..... 33

FECCA recommends that the Australian Government, via the Department of Immigration and Citizenship, arrange for its publication 'Beginning a Life in Australia' to be translated into languages other than English, printed and distributed to Government and non-Government organisations.

FECCA RECOMMENDATION 2..... 34

FECCA recommends that the Australian Government develop a centralised information port for new arrivals. An idea starting point would be the translation of the www.australia.gov.au website.

2. Difficulties accessing Government services that affect all service users 35

FECCA RECOMMENDATION 3..... 46

FECCA recommends that the Australian Government increase the level of Newstart payments to better match the reality of the cost of living, especially housing affordability.

FECCA RECOMMENDATION 4..... 53

FECCA recommends that the Australian Government give priority to supporting efforts that promote the cultural competency of health professionals in order to more effectively address women's healthcare needs.

3. Practical issues specifically facing CALD clients 56

FECCA RECOMMENDATION 5..... 64

FECCA recommends that the Australian Government increase the funding for and re-design AMEP in the context of the needs of newer immigrant communities by increasing hours and structuring classes in line with levels of English and cultural needs in order to respond to issues of illiteracy and other specific issues faced by refugees and newly arrived immigrants.

FECCA RECOMMENDATION 6..... 65

FECCA recommends that the Australian Government, via the Department of Immigration and Citizenship, continue (or re-commence if it was stopped) to fund childcare for children under school age of new arrivals undertaking AMEP and to review and increase the mechanism to ensure that all relevant new arrivals are made aware of it.

FECCA RECOMMENDATION 7 65

FECCA recommends that the Australian Government amend its 2012 changes to JETCCFA so as to increase the exception categories to include ESL and similar courses as well as AMEP and LLNP, given the importance of facilitating English language competency for all Australians.

FECCA RECOMMENDATION 8 66

FECCA recommends that the Australian Government adjust English class eligibility to be more responsive to need and not be limited by time since arrival or visa class held.

FECCA RECOMMENDATION 9..... 68

FECCA recommends that the Australian Government support the learning of newly arrived immigrants by:

- requiring educators in Government schools, Government-funded TAFE courses to have completed (a) cross-cultural communication and (b) teaching ESL units;
- encouraging TAFEs and other learning institutions to provide feedback to unsuccessful applicants for courses to increase transparency and diminish the perception of discrimination; and
- ensuring Government-funded learning institutions have adequate resources to provide support staff to assist students with particular needs, including students who speak English is a second language. This is expected to be implemented in primary schools as part of the Gonski recommendations but FECCA suggests it should be extended up to TAFE level.

FECCA RECOMMENDATION 10..... 71

FECCA recommends that the Australian Government require the industry bodies it endorses to report annually on their efforts to improve overseas skills recognition and provide satisfactory quantitative and qualitative data to demonstrate the success of such efforts.

FECCA RECOMMENDATION 11..... 72

FECCA recommends that the Australian Government review the 'star rating' system for JSA providers. Such a review should examine ways to reward JSA providers that successfully place people from higher JSA streams in work, including CALD job seekers who have greater services and support needs.

FECCA RECOMMENDATION 12..... 73

FECCA recommends that the Australian Government increase the cultural competency of JSA service providers. This could be achieved by:

- requiring Government contract holders to implement compulsory cultural competency training for all staff; and/or
- identifying a number of contracts for the provision of specialist services to CALD clients which would be won by service providers with the necessary expertise.

FECCA RECOMMENDATION 13..... 75

FECCA recommends that the Australian Government improve services to CALD job seekers by:

- requiring JSA providers ensure their classifications of job seekers through the JSCL takes into consideration the potential cultural challenges for CALD clients even if their English level is high and they have education and experience; and/or
- introducing a CALD and/or refugee specific stream to the JSCL.

FECCA RECOMMENDATION 14..... 75

FECCA recommends that the Australian Government ensure, via JSAs, that all new arrivals seeking work are provided with assistance to write resumes and selection criteria responses and prepare for interviews in the Australian context.

FECCA RECOMMENDATION 15..... 78

FECCA recommends that the Australian Government support, for example through a funded dedicated liaison officer in different towns and cities, relationship building between employment service providers working with CALD clients and organisations that will employ or provide work experience for CALD clients.

4. How the system is responding to CALD-specific needs and issues 86**FECCA RECOMMENDATION 16..... 94**

FECCA recommends that, in instances where Government bodies or Government-funded organisations require certain education qualifications of their employees, that a cross-cultural communication component of such study should also be required. This should include teaching qualifications (primary, secondary, TAFE, university), TAFE certifications (child care certificate, aged care certificate) and other professional qualifications (community health, social work qualifications and so on).

FECCA RECOMMENDATION 17..... 94

FECCA recommends that the Australian Government require its agencies to demonstrate via regular reporting mechanisms that their commitment to culturally competent service provision is supported at all levels of the agency and by any contracted service provider. One reportable element should be a demonstration that there is a sufficient funding allocation to train staff to provide culturally competent service in all direct service delivery situations.

FECCA RECOMMENDATION 18..... 103

FECCA recommends that the Australian Government review the effectiveness of engaging NAATI 'Accredited' standard interpreters to assist at Government shopfronts and in other Government service-provision settings.

5. Accountability of Services 104**FECCA RECOMMENDATION 19..... 108**

FECCA recommends that the Australian Government strengthen the oversight of employment service providers to ensure clients are assisted appropriate to their needs by:

- implementing the recommendations of the 2011-2012 audit report;
- ensuring that evaluations include an assessment of aligning assistance provided with individual needs of clients; and
- ensuring that DEEWR's complaints and feedback system for JSAs is promoted effectively so that it reaches clients, and is in accessible formats including written mechanism such as paper forms, 'in-person' mechanisms such as an officer to provide feedback verbally, and with information on how to get assistance in languages other than English.

Methodology

FECCA's 2012-13 Access and Equity Report details findings based on face-to-face consultations and survey questionnaires undertaken with CALD individuals and service providers from communities throughout Australia.

The goals of this process and the subsequent report were to:

- provide an open, genuine and direct opportunity for representatives of CALD communities and those delivering CALD support and services to provide feedback on current Government services;
- gather qualitative, grassroots information about the accessibility and equitability of these services, focusing particularly on what is working well, what areas require improvement and what innovative and practical measures can be implemented to more effectively meet the needs of CALD Australians;
- develop a solid evidence base to draw from in providing advice to Government about how to develop and improve its services to ensure their accessibility and equitability for consumers from CALD backgrounds;
- provide Government agencies with tangible examples of the experiences of CALD consumers in accessing and using services to enable greater understanding of the challenges they face and the intersectional disadvantage and marginalisation that they often confront; and
- facilitate the Government's social inclusion aspirations by reducing disadvantage through increased service accessibility and equitability to CALD Australians.

Consultative mechanisms

FECCA held four face-to-face community consultations across metropolitan and regional Australia. To complement the face-to-face consultation process, FECCA also designed an online survey which was made available for several months via FECCA's website to coincide with the consultation events being hosted around Australia. FECCA also provided opportunities for telephone consultations.

Further details regarding the community consultations, the survey and the telephone consultations appear below.

FECCA consulted around 230 individuals around Australia in total.

Community Consultations

Input to approach

Before undertaking the community consultations, FECCA developed an approach to themes and locations. Further detail on the approach is provided in the *Locations and Consultation Structure and Focus* sections below.

FECCA sought advice and comment on the proposed approach from DIAC, as well as other external stakeholders including the Commonwealth Ombudsman, the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC), the Department of Human Services (DHS) and the Office for Women in the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA). The discussions that came out of this process added value to the consultation process. For example, the Office for Women promoted the consultations through its network. In addition, the Commonwealth Ombudsman's office was positive and responsive, and initiated a meeting to further discuss FECCA's Access and Equity project as well as other avenues for collaboration. The Commonwealth Ombudsman also provided hundreds of brochures about the right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman in languages other than English, which FECCA distributed at the consultations.

Locations

Community consultations were held in four locations across Australia, specifically selected to identify a broad array of issues, as relevant to CALD communities in both metropolitan and regional areas. Details of the chosen locations and consultations that were subsequently held are presented below.

Auburn, NSW

Auburn was identified as an appropriate location for FECCA's first consultation given the opportunities to address issues relevant to recent arrivals, emerging communities and special needs groups such as women, humanitarian entrants, youth, aged and the unemployed.

FECCA developed a strong partnership with Auburn Diversity Services Inc. (ADSi) to host the consultation, whose local knowledge and strong networks ensured a substantial turn-out of participants and the opportunity for FECCA to hear a wide range of views and perspectives from diverse community representatives.

FECCA staff were able to arrange for the informal and unpaid translation of the Auburn consultation flyer in two community languages, provided as *Appendices B and C*. A sample English flyer is also provided as *Appendix D*. The consultation subsequently attracted a large number of speakers of those two languages.

To maximise participant feedback, the consultation was held as three concurrent group discussions, comprising two large groups from the Chinese and Afghan communities and a smaller South Sudanese community group. ADSi staff conversant in these three language groups assisted FECCA staff in each of the discussion sessions by interpreting feedback in instances where the consultation participant/s demonstrated limited English skills. This interpreting assistance was invaluable as it allowed members of these communities to fully engage with the consultation discussion and easily converse in their native language regarding their experiences in accessing Government services (see *Language sensitivities and use of interpreters* below for further information).

FECCA's Auburn consultation was held on 4 December 2012 from 9am to 12pm and attracted over 50 participants.

In addition, FECCA also received feedback through conducting an individual discussion with a service provider representative via telephone subsequent to the consultation.

Cooma, NSW

FECCA hosted its second face-to-face consultation in Cooma, NSW, to gather perspectives from CALD individuals and service providers in a regional setting. The consultation provided perspectives on issues specific to that location and particularly those related to health, employment and education services. Cooma was identified as a suitable location for FECCA's second consultation, given its historical place as home to an established community of individuals from CALD backgrounds, many of whom settled in Cooma following their involvement with the Snowy Hydro Scheme.

FECCA established a strong partnership with the Multicultural Activity Group in Cooma (MAGIC), which provided extensive support in assisting the organisation and hosting of the consultation.

FECCA's Cooma consultation was held on 13 December 2012, from 2pm to 5pm and attracted 15 participants.

Email conversations continued with MAGIC following the consultation that clarified some of the issues raised by consultation participants.

Perth, WA

Locations in Western Australia (WA) have not featured predominately in FECCA's most recent community consultation work. As such, a consultation in Perth was recognised as an opportunity to hear new perspectives on Access and Equity issues as relevant to Perth's CALD population. Coverage of topics was wide-ranging, including feedback, predominantly from State Government and private (including ethno-specific) service-providers, as well as participants with personal experiences as clients, on education, employment, housing, ageing and other issues relevant to both new and established communities in Perth's metropolitan setting.

FECCA used its existing relationship with the Ethnic Communities' Council of Western Australia (ECCWA) to organise the consultation, the latter providing ongoing support and a venue at which to host the consultation.

FECCA's Perth consultation was held on 25 March 2013, from 2pm to 5pm and attracted 12 participants.



Ballarat, VIC

Almost 8 per cent of Ballarat's population are born overseas, positioning it as an ideal location for FECCA to hold its final consultation. In addition to a number of service provider representatives, the consultation had a strong representation of CALD people from new and emerging communities (NECs), including Iranian and Togolese communities, as well as strong representation from some European communities, including Polish and Croatian communities, providing the opportunity to cover the broad range of key focus areas identified as topics for discussion by FECCA and subsequently covered in this report.

FECCA drew upon and further developed its existing relationship with the Ballarat Regional Multicultural Council (BRMC) to organise the consultation. BRMC spent considerable time to provide ongoing support in organising and promoting the consultation, which facilitated a high rate of participation. BRMC also provided a venue and had a number of staff assist on at the event to ensure a successful and informative session.

FECCA's Ballarat consultation was held on 16 April 2013, from 6pm to 9pm and attracted close to 50 participants.

In lieu of the final consultation location of Ballarat, FECCA initially sought to host this consultation in Geelong (VIC), given the 20 per cent of Geelong's population that identify as culturally and linguistically diverse. Geelong was also initially proposed as a possible location given that the city has, over the past four years, increased its humanitarian intake of Burmese, Sudanese and Congolese people, which subsequently offered FECCA an opportunity to receive insights from a broad range of new and emerging community members.

However, following initial discussions with FECCA's prospective partner organisation in Geelong, *Diversitat*, it was decided to relocate the consultation. While these discussions were positive, and it was agreed that *Diversitat* and FECCA would like to work together to hold a consultation in the future, *Diversitat* raised the possibility of 'consultation fatigue' affecting attendance and input at Geelong consultation as a result of concurrent CALD community consultations hosted by Government agencies. The decision was subsequently made to relocate the final consultation to Ballarat, to ensure a higher rate of turn-out and greater levels of participation of consultation attendees.

Structure and Focus

Consultations were organised and promoted as grassroots, community-focused events aimed at drawing insights from CALD participants through face-to-face consultation.

Venues were generously provided by local CALD service providers and partners, details of which are included in the ‘Locations’ section above.

During the 2012-13 planning stage, it was determined that it would be valuable to introduce focus areas for each yearly consultation. This would enable FECCA to obtain more detailed feedback in each given focus area, with the intention to change the focus areas each year to allow for broad coverage of issues over time. It was decided that the 2012-13 consultations would have a focus service area of employment as well as a focus demographic of women.

In order to attract women to the consultations, FECCA advised our partner organisations that women’s issues comprised a particular interest for this year. Our partners then assisted where possible to encourage attendance by women. In addition, the Office for Women at FaHCSIA promoted the Auburn and Cooma consultations through a women’s email network. Furthermore, at the Cooma consultation, a small women’s only discussion group was held. At all consultations, staff asked participants about their experiences accessing women’s health services as well as child and family support services.

To ensure a focus on employment, the topic was generally discussed first at each consultation and for a lengthy period of time.

Each consultation was conducted over three hours and covered some, or all, of the following key issues areas:

- employment (as the focus service area, employment was discussed extensively at all consultations);
- health and women’s health in particular;
- education and training;
- housing;
- ageing and aged care;
- settlement services;
- child and family support services; and
- justice, policing and safety.

Attendees

The consultations welcomed a broad range of contributions from participants representing local CALD communities, ethno-specific and mainstream service providers and government departments and agencies (predominantly from the relevant state).

A list of the different ethnic and language groups represented across the consultations is at *Appendix E*.

Whilst consultations targeted CALD community members specifically, the involvement of service providers and Australian Government and/or state agency representatives provided a range of different perspectives, as well as additional clarification of issues and good practice models which have been incorporated into this Report.

In addition, some CALD community representatives at the consultations were concurrently employed by CALD service provision organisations. These participants' feedback was interesting as it reflected the dual perspectives of both the community and service-delivery organisations.

Participants in all forms of the consultation process had a range of different experiences. Some were individuals in early stages of settlement or from new and emerging communities, and others from long-established immigrant and refugee communities. This resulted in an extensive and invaluable volume of qualitative data reflected in this Report.

Partnerships

Fostering partnerships is an integral component of FECCA's Access and Equity reporting program. Partnerships between FECCA, State and Territory Ethnic Communities' Councils (ECCs), Multicultural Councils (MCs), Multicultural Communities' Councils (MCCs) and local community organisations are particularly important in facilitating relationship-building with local community groups, and, by extension, the CALD communities with whom they work.

In implementing its 2012-13 Access and Equity program, FECCA established partnerships with the following organisations to host consultations:

- Auburn Diversity Services Inc. (ADSi);
- Multicultural Activity Group in Cooma (MAGIC);
- Ethnic Communities' Council of Western Australia (ECCWA); and
- Ballarat Regional Multicultural Council (BRMC).

FECCA is grateful for the contributions of these organisations and their staff, who provided ongoing assistance and venues at which to host each consultation. FECCA is also appreciative of additional support (including language and translation services) which was also provided to facilitate effective consultation sessions.

Confidentiality and Consent

FECCA understands and respects the need to safeguard the identities of all consultation attendees. FECCA is also committed to the belief that gaining consent from participants is a vital part of good practice in hosting consultations. Providing contributors with details about how their information will be used and stored, as well as allowing them the ability to opt-out, if desired, is a demonstration of respect and the extent to which FECCA values the contributions of consultation participants.

As such, FECCA issued consent forms at all of its face-to-face consultations that included details to participants on how information and feedback would be used and subsequently stored, following the consultations. A copy of the consent form is attached as *Appendix F*. While the majority of all people at each consultation provided their

written consent, FECCA staff, before commencing the discussion, also verbally explained the conditions of consent and how participant feedback and information would be used, and provided the option for participants to ‘opt out’ at this stage if they wished to do so. Where possible, this was also explained in languages other than English.

In accordance with FECCA’s commitment to confidentiality, participants were provided with an assurance that all names and distinguishing features regarding participants would not be disclosed in FECCA’s final report or in the context of its related access and equity work.

Audio Recording

Upon obtaining consent from participants, FECCA undertook to make audio recordings of all of its face-to-face consultations to ensure accuracy of information recorded. This method, complemented by comprehensive note-taking by FECCA staff throughout consultations, subsequently enabled important points to be comprehensively noted and pertinent quotes to be extracted, for inclusion in the final report.

Language sensitivities and use of interpreters

FECCA recognises the extent to which making use of translation and interpreting services facilitates increased participation and inclusiveness in consultation and survey processes. On this basis, FECCA would, if it were possible financially, incorporate the use of such services wherever possible in its consultations. Given resource constraints, however, the use of professional interpreting and translating services was not possible for FECCA’s 2012-13 consultations.

However, FECCA was grateful for support provided by Auburn Diversity Services Inc., to make relevant bilingual staff available to interpret questions and feedback where possible for its Auburn consultation. Assistance provided for this purpose facilitated not only a deeper engagement with the consultation themes from participants, but also participants’ ability to feel included in the Access and Equity process, and empowered to provide valuable feedback.

FECCA regrets that it was not able to offer professional translation and interpreting services at all of its consultation.

FECCA notes the importance of language sensitivity as a factor in facilitating effective consultation and other processes through which to gain direct feedback from ethnic communities and asks DIAC to increase future FECCA funding to enable this to take place.

Evaluation

In order to improve FECCA’s feedback and grassroots consultation mechanisms, attendees at each of the face-to-face consultations were provided with evaluation feedback sheets. A copy of the evaluation form is attached as *Appendix G*. Participants

were asked to comment upon the delivery of the consultation, in addition to the relevance of topics discussed, time allowed for discussion, venue locations and ease of understanding concerning the information presented. Advice was particularly sought on areas for improvement for FECCA's future consultations, details of which will be considered and actioned, where possible.

Telephone consultations

In addition to conducting face-to-face consultations, FECCA also undertook to consult with individuals who were not present at the consultations, or who wished to provide additional feedback as part of a follow-up conversation with FECCA staff. Telephone consultations were subsequently held with a number of individuals who provided in-depth feedback on Access and Equity issues relating to their communities.

By way of encouraging additional feedback through this method, contact details for FECCA's Canberra office were advertised on all promotional materials for the face-to-face consultations, and participants at these events were verbally informed of the opportunity to speak further with FECCA staff and provide additional feedback.

Survey

As an alternative electronic method for gathering information, FECCA developed an online Access and Equity survey, a copy of which is attached to this report as *Appendix H*. This survey received a very positive response with feedback from over 100 participants, including CALD community members and service providers. A list of the different ethnic and language groups who responded to the survey is at *Appendix E*.

The survey was designed to facilitate the provision of feedback from those who could not attend consultations or wished to provide more information following the face-to-face consultations. The survey was distributed through FECCA's network of CALD peak bodies, community service agencies and individuals and was simultaneously promoted at each of FECCA's face-to-face consultations.

The survey design included an initial section seeking basic demographic and personal information about the respondent, including their gender, age, location, as well as self-identification of their cultural, linguistic and religious background. Participants were also asked to comment on how long they had been in Australia and the terms of their settlement (for example, if they came to Australia as a refugee, or received an employer-sponsored or independent skilled migrant visa).

The survey subsequently sought feedback from respondents on Access and Equity of Government services relating to:

- settlement services;
- education and training;
- welfare services;
- employment services;
- health and women's health services;
- policing and legal services;
- child and family support services; and
- housing services.

Survey questions sought specific feedback on respondent awareness of available services, availability of useful information regarding services, as well as what aspects of service delivery were most effective and ineffective for clients.

In completing the survey, respondents were asked to comment on their personal experiences regarding service delivery in the stipulated areas. They were also encouraged to provide additional feedback, if desired, about their experiences with government services further to those specifically mentioned.

Recognising the linguistic challenges associated with formulating this type of feedback mechanism, development of the survey involved careful consideration of language used to avoid confusion and complexity.

Whilst FECCA acknowledges the importance of and the need for translating and interpreting services to factor as a key consideration in planning its consultation activities, it regrets that, due to resource limitations, it was not possible to make the online survey available in languages other than English. FECCA recognises the extent to which this may have subsequently precluded greater participation from survey respondents, particularly those from NECs.

A full summary of the quantifiable results of the survey is at Appendix I.



Findings, Good practice and Recommendations

1. Information, knowledge and connecting to and between services

FECCA's Access and Equity consultations ask CALD Australians about their experiences accessing Government services. In later chapters, FECCA outlines some of the challenges CALD Australians face accessing these services. However, to have experienced a challenge accessing a service is to have *tried* to access the service. This chapter addresses some of the reasons why some CALD Australians have not tried to access the services they need.

In the first instance, immigrating to a new country presents a range of challenges in relation to systems awareness. For many, the way that Australian Government services work is different from their previous experiences. Knowledge of how the Australian system works is integral to engaging with it.

Secondly, CALD Australians may not be able to find information about services that are offered. This could be because the information is not made available through appropriate channels and is thus not visible, it is not made available in appropriate formats and is thus not accessible, and/or it is not made available in appropriate languages and is thus not understandable.

Thirdly, this chapter addresses the question of which organisations are and should be responsible for the dissemination of information. FECCA recounts the confusion and frustration that arises when people are referred and re-referred, as if on a circuit of different agencies, because of insufficient communication between agencies. It also addresses the role of multicultural services agencies and Migrant Resource Centres

(MRCs). Finally, FECCA recommends that establishing a single access point for information about the full suite of Australian Government services, in languages other than English and via a range of formats, would help to solve many of the problems presented in the first part of this chapter.

1.1 Knowledge of systems and processes

"For newly arrived immigrants it takes at least 5 years to become fully familiar with the system." (survey response)

As will be discussed in Section 1.2, some CALD clients are not aware of specific government services (provided either at the state/territory and/or Commonwealth levels), and are thus unable to use them. However, systems knowledge can also be a prerequisite to accessing services. CALD Australians, especially recent immigrants, often lack knowledge of Australian Government services systems and

processes in their entirety.

FECCA received feedback from many participants (particularly through the survey but also at the Ballarat, Perth and Cooma consultations) about the way in which having or lacking broader knowledge about the Australian system and set-up affected one's ability to know about services and have the knowledge to navigate the service system.

"[P]eople need to have a little bit of knowledge of how the system works and in some cases, access to computers. One of the big barriers that the Government need to understand is that people from CALD communities come from countries where the system is totally different and for someone that never access the type of services provided here in Australia is very hard to imagine or think about that, it's not part of their imagination, their way of thinking to think about this, so people won't access mainly because they don't have a clue that a lot of assistance is out there for them." (survey response)

A couple of responses including the one above cited the difference between the Australian system and that of their home country:

- in some cases it is set up differently;
- in other cases the existence of a services system such as Australia's is something new entirely; or
- the services in Australia are unexpectedly much more comprehensive than in their country of origin.

As one survey respondent explained:

"Difficult for immigrant coming from different culture and practices where government services are poor or not existent and they don't know what to expect. They believe if they cannot survive on their own then they may be sent back." (survey response)

A number of participants suggested the system was designed with an assumption that people would know how to use it. One participant explained that her ease in accessing information on Government services came about because she had been educated about the social welfare system in her Australian higher education studies. While it is positive that this person had received education that has assisted her, it is of concern that specific higher education studies were necessary for the participant to gain the wider systems knowledge necessary to access Australia's social services. This example clearly demonstrates the complexity of Australian systems and processes.

The effects of being unfamiliar with the Australian system are broad. Clearly, difficulties accessing Government services are one effect of general unfamiliarity with the Australian system. For many new immigrants, social services are a key aspect of the new system that they must become familiar with. It should also be remembered that there are several other aspects of Australian systems that a new resident must familiarise themselves with concurrently, including Australian laws and regulations, industry standards and cultural norms.

In Cooma, a participant commented on how police checks can be a new and possibly frightening concept for some newly arrived immigrants.

"I had a lady come from Fiji (Indian). She had a certificate in Aged Care. Did all the applying, processes...nothing. In that, I wasn't aware, the police check. It's quite intrusive and very scary for people coming from another country. If you don't know what that is, and if you don't know that everyone has to have it—you'd rather not apply for that job. I said, that lady is willing to volunteer work. Anything, to get started. And that led to a paid job. Her willingness [got her the job]." (Cooma)

A female community member at the Ballarat consultation raised the issue of health literacy, identifying sun safety issues as an example. The prominence of Australian sun safety messages and Government campaigns on this topic can be totally new to some immigrants. Another female community member, at the Cooma consultation, described

her difficulties in reaching an understanding of the Australian health system more broadly:

Another issue raised was the difficulty experienced by new arrivals in obtaining Australian safety systems knowledge, such as the use of fire alarms and how they work. A female participant at the Cooma consultation explained that knowledge of the Australian qualifications system—and engagement with it—is necessary to finding a job:

"I still don't understand the Australian health system, about Medicare and bulk-billing. Some doctors bulk bill and others don't, and I don't understand how that works. It's not explained."
(Cooma)

"In Australia, I cannot say that I'm a good cook without having a piece of paper [qualification] to prove it. I didn't know that."
(Cooma)

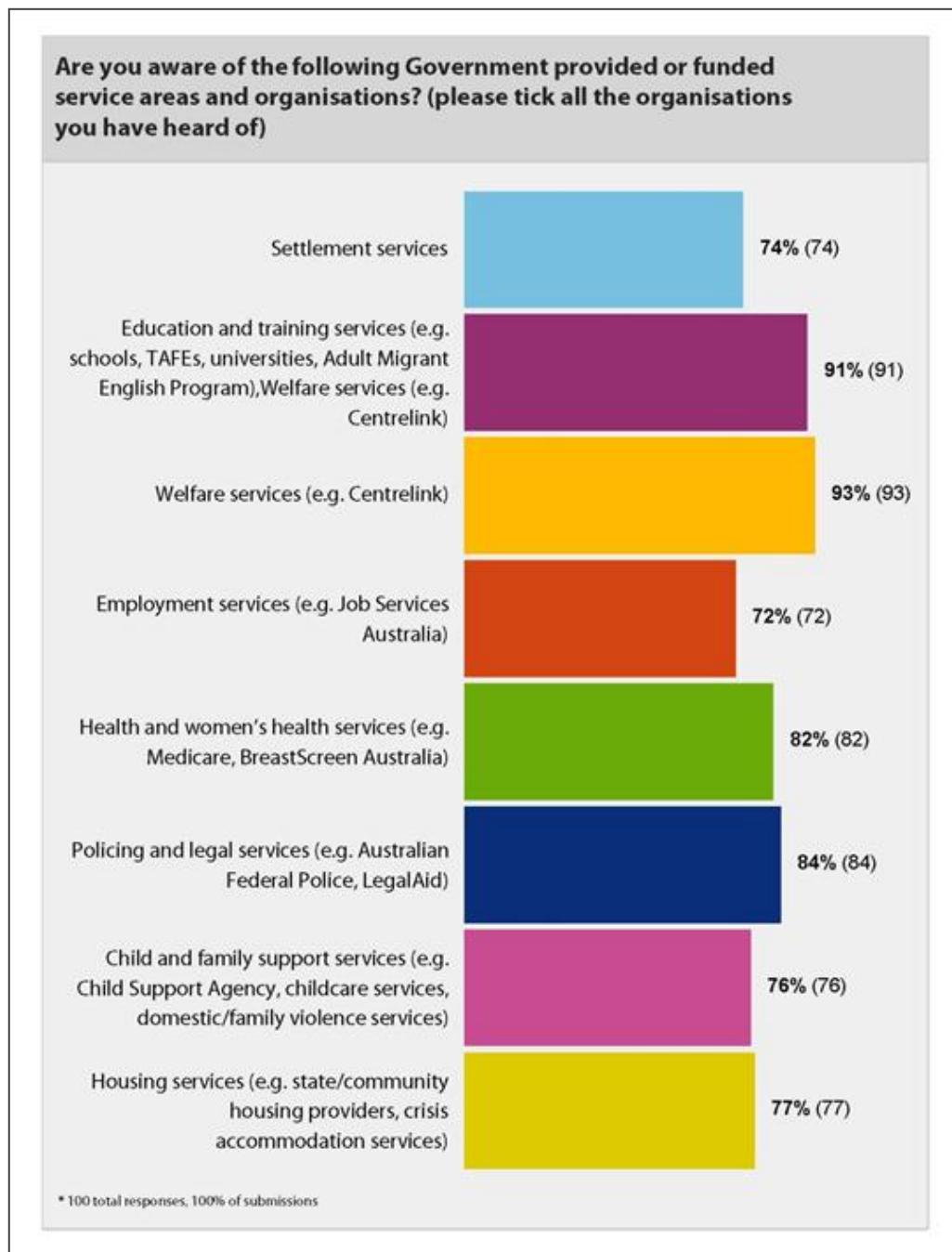
Several other participants gave examples of systems knowledge that needs to be acquired after arrival in Australia. At the Perth consultation, one participant explained that newly arrived students must become familiar with the education system and the requirements for compulsory

school attendance in Australia. A participant at the Cooma consultation identified the housing system as a system that is often quite different to housing systems in other countries, particularly with regard to lease arrangements as well as the number of people who real estate agents will expect to share a house.

1.2 Knowledge and visibility of services

FECCA's Access and Equity online survey was designed to gauge respondents' knowledge about Government services, and their experiences using them. Figure 1.1, drawn from the survey, gives a detailed account of the relative awareness of respondents about different service areas. In general, about three quarters of respondents had heard of the main types of Government services available in Australia. A majority of survey respondents had used most of the types of services the survey asked, although the survey was not able to assess respondents' use of every Government service.

Figure 1.1



FECCA considers that visibility of services is particularly important, and considers that Government has the responsibility to advertise the services its agencies provide. As a male participant at FECCA's Auburn consultation said:

"You have to attend when you know something. If you don't know, and you have not been told there is something here, it is hard for you to go and attend." (Auburn)

Throughout the consultation process, many people gave feedback about the visibility—or lack thereof—of different Government services. People were vocal about this area via the online survey and at the Auburn consultation particularly. Much of the feedback FECCA received indicated that many services were not easily visible and that respondents experienced difficulties finding information about them. The reasons for this lack of visibility put forward by respondents included a lack of advertising, a lack of knowledge about where to find such services or information about them, incidences of only partial information being provided and the lack of a centralised information source (see Section 1.7).

It was also suggested that difficulties arose where individuals felt alone and detached from organisational support. Furthermore, it was suggested that community education on Government services needed to be more proactive, with the suggestion that presently people only became sufficiently informed of the Government services in times of desperation.

One participant suggested that some services were more “visible” than others, with child and family support services cited as being more obscure. Another consultation participant echoed this sentiment, saying that in her experience child and family support services were advertised together with the school system or settlement program and that, other than that, the information was generally not advertised. This same participant suggested that the visibility of services was very much dependent on each service provider, including in the areas of health, employment, education and training, and child and family support.

FECCA also heard that it was particularly difficult for people to find services if the function of the service was not included in the organisation’s name. One survey respondent provided a particular example, citing the name of an employment service provider, which was double-barrel surname without any suffix such as ‘services’. While the example organisation was not a Government agency itself, as a JSA provider and therefore a Government funded service, FECCA argues that the organisation’s services should be accessible to CALD people under the Multicultural Access and Equity Framework. It is unclear how this service provider made its status as JSA provider known to potential CALD clients.

In some cases, participants had not heard of services that exist to help them:

“I’ve never really heard about settlement services. My family helped me to settle in!” (Cooma)

“I didn’t know that you could get translation services for doctors’ appointments. I was aware of translation services for immigration, but not for health!” (Cooma)

It appeared that many people who knew about the existence of services did so because they had been informed by a staff member at a local MRC, an ECC or an informal support worker (the role of these workers in informing CALD communities about services is further discussed in Section 1.6).

This was confirmed by a small number of survey respondents who advised that they had good information about Government services. However, one of these respondents cited the assistance of community service organisations and workers as helping him to gain this information. Another respondent cited her employment in Government as the cause of her having knowledge about the services. In neither case were the respondents made aware of Government services by Government service providers.

It appeared that participants' awareness of specialist services was more limited. For example, while nearly everyone had heard of Centrelink, participants were less likely to be aware of programs such as Local Connections to Work (through DHS), the New Enterprise Incentive Scheme (through the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR)) or AppointWomen (FaHCSIA).

Similarly, it appeared that the only people who were aware of mental health services were those who had specifically sought out such assistance. This is concerning because, given some cultural differences in attitudes toward mental health, CALD people may not actively seek mental health services. It is very important that information is visible to CALD Australians about the existence of mental health services and acceptability of accessing them *before* a mental health problem may emerge. The organisation *BeyondBlue* has undertaken some good work in this regard by partnering with Mental Health in Multicultural Australia to produce many resources in languages other than English.

Many people consulted suggested the need for a centralised point at which to find all relevant information on Government services, which FECCA discusses below.

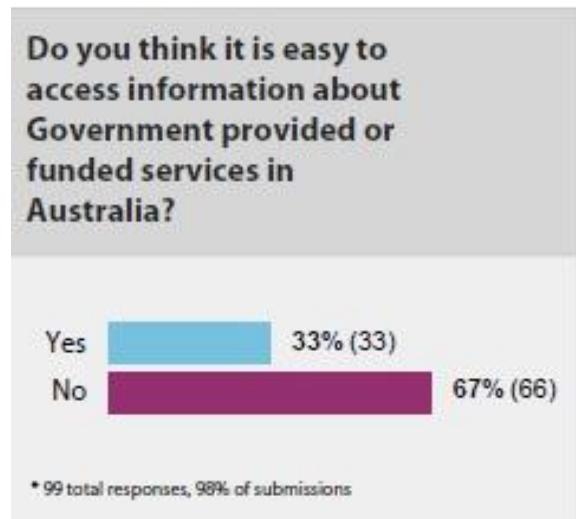
1.3 Presentation and communication of information

As a young female participant at the Ballarat consultation stated:

This highlights the importance for Government agencies to consider the way in which information about their services is presented so that it is suitable for clients and responsive to CALD clients' needs. In order to effectively respond to such needs, information ought to be presented in a range of formats. The majority of survey respondents found it difficult to access information on Government services, as is reflected in Figure 1.2.

"Most 'multicultural' people that arrive in Australia don't have any connection to the internet, so it's still not accessible so paper information is very important." (Ballarat)

Figure 1.2



Obviously, as was discussed in the last section, many participants would like to see information available in their language. However, where that is not the case, participants offered feedback on the type of English used and whether it is presented in a simple and accessible way. For example, a female survey respondent suggested that where information is not available in languages other than English, information should be presented in easy or basic English rather than formal language often used by Government agencies. This suggestion was echoed at the Cooma consultation. Another female survey respondent commented on Government 'jargon', saying she felt that simple messages delivered via a range of formats would be better than the way in which Government websites currently convey key messages. Another survey respondent added that departmental staff used Australian slang that recent immigrants could not understand. Finally, some survey participants commented on difficulties they experienced navigating information on Government websites, with one person suggesting that layout of such websites was not user-friendly.

While it was not made explicit, difficulties in navigating websites could be due to lower levels of technological literacy by some CALD clients. Some survey respondents commented on this issue; one noted that, whilst much information can be accessed online, just knowing where such a starting point is problematic for many newly arrived immigrants and refugees. Another drew attention to this issue regarding FECCA's own online survey:

While the provision of hard-copy written information solves the problem of a lack of internet access, it presumes that all new arrivals are literate, which is not always the case. As FECCA heard, some refugee and humanitarian entrants are not literate in their first language when they arrive in Australia:

"Translation of material alone is not enough to get a clear message across. The translated literature ought to be discussed in person with newly arrived immigrants via a professional interpreter."
(survey response)

"Can I say that, this survey is great and very nice effort BUT it targets people who are literate in English also literate in computer. It excludes people who are newly arrived who have no access to computer or know any English."
(survey response)

FECCA acknowledges this feedback and agrees that the online survey requires English and computer literacy and will thus unfortunately exclude some of its target audience. This could be addressed in future years if increased funding for translation and interpreter services is provided by DIAC. As discussed above, when trying to reach a particular target group, it is necessary to do so in a number of formats that respond to particular issues faced by that group. FECCA's yearly consultations are held face-to-face in communities, and this year FECCA was able to hold one of the consultations in two languages other than English. This is not always possible due to funding constraints and lack of volunteers with the necessary linguistic skills.

It is a positive step when Government agencies modify their information to make it accessible and relevant to CALD audiences, by presenting it in hard-copy format or in languages other than English. However, Government agencies also need to consider how such information will reach the intended audience and whether it will be visible. This was echoed by a female survey respondent who felt that the Government in general should more proactively approach immigrants to access services. With regard to translated information, a service provider representative at the Cooma consultation emphasised the idea that translated information needs to be visible for it to be worthwhile: "*there is not enough information, visibly available, in other languages*". In Section 1.6, the role that MRC-type organisations and 'multicultural' officers can play in distributing information to CALD clients is discussed.

1.4 What information and in what language?

The matter of language as tied to the concept of Access and Equity comes up in a range of situations and is a central factor affecting whether or not equal outcomes in Government services are achieved. In the first instance, as will be discussed in this Chapter, before one can seek to access a Government service, language barriers can affect whether one knows about services in the first place. Chapter 3 will then discuss language barriers and the need to learn English as a specific challenge facing CALD immigrants in accessing services, and Chapter 4 will go into a broader discussion of how the Government responds to the linguistic challenges facing CALD clients in knowing about and accessing Government services.

With regard to how language barriers prevent knowledge of services, FECCA received feedback from various participants at all consultations and from respondents to the online survey that there was not enough information on services available in languages

other than English. In contrast, one female survey respondent welcomed current health service accessibility due to the availability of information in many languages, and cited BreastScreen Australia as a positive example. Another survey respondent articulated his view that most relevant information is available to consumers through a variety of channels and in almost every language spoken by a diverse background groups. Despite this positive feedback, most participants considered the information available in languages other than English insufficient.

A participant at Cooma suggested that for all Government brochures and factsheets, the provision at least *some* information in languages other than English may lead to a CALD person seeking further information about a given program:

"It would be a good idea to put at least basic information, just one page, just to at least attention to different languages. For my mother-in-law, if she looks anything with Gujarati, she'll pick that up. Then she'll have that interest." (Cooma)

Some participants made comments about the availability of information in specific languages. For example, a number of participants commented that Government agency-distributed information was not available in Chinese, and another participant specifically noted the lack of Indonesian language material. A participant at the Auburn consultation further suggested that Mandarin should be included as a language for factsheets on housing and Centrelink services given the size of the Chinese-speaking population in Australia. The participant explained that this did not currently take place, even in instances when factsheets were translated into other languages.

FECCA suggests that if a Government agency chooses to devote resources to make information about its services available in languages other than English, it should ensure the information is relevant and will lead to the client having knowledge of the service. In choosing target languages for translation, Government agencies should ensure that they take into account both demographics (prevalence of language spoken) and need (prevalence of speakers who do not speak English well). As the Australian Bureau of Statistics collects both data sets during the Census, Government agencies should be well-equipped to implement this suggestion.

1.5 Referral and communication between agencies

Problems with a lack of referral or communication between agencies are not restricted to CALD clients. However, a large number of participants in FECCA's consultations, particularly via the survey and at the Cooma consultation, highlighted the gravity of this issue.

For example, a female survey respondent said that she was not informed by Centrelink about Jobs Services Australia (JSA), and thus did not know of its existence. Another female survey respondent told of the confusion generated from being referred to too many different agencies—"it's like being kicked around." Yet another criticised the lack of co-ordination and sufficient connection between the different government services, suggesting that most information was obtained amongst new arrivals by word of mouth.

One element of the confusion was Australia's three levels of government and the difficulties experienced by new arrivals understanding their links as well as and differing roles. Not knowing which level of government to approach regarding a given issue leads to frustrations, as one female survey respondent explained:

"It is tedious and frustrating having to repeat three times your story to three different people who keep on passing your phone call to yet another worker who doesn't know what has been discussed before." (survey response)

This idea of confusion about the different levels of government accords with FECCA's experience in hosting the consultations: while FECCA explained the consultation was focused on Australian Government services, many people gave feedback about services and issues related to state and local government services. However, FECCA still considers feedback about services not directly falling under the responsibility of the Australian Government relevant because of the increasing links between levels of government in Australia. For example, the Australian Government is taking an increasing role in the areas of housing and healthcare. Where the Australian Government offers funding or has agreements with state governments, FECCA considers it incumbent on the Australian Government to ensure that the services delivered are accessible to the whole population, including CALD Australians.

A number of participants gave examples about communication and coordination between a mainstream agency and a multicultural-specific organisation. Generally, such examples were positive, citing them as instances where CALD clients were more effectively reached. For example, in Cooma, one TAFE representative described how she worked with the multicultural worker of MAGIC to attract CALD students to a course for women who had finished child rearing and were trying to re-enter the workforce.

"There are a lot of CALD women who come in.... I would generally consult with [multicultural worker in Cooma] – people who may have the contacts with those people who might like to come in. I don't know how we tap into people who aren't connected with [name]..." (Cooma)

This highlights the effectiveness of multicultural workers and organisations, something which is discussed in greater detail below.

1.6 Role of MRCs, multicultural officers and ethno-specific services

FECCA identifies two distinct needs in relation to information provision: firstly that information exists, and secondly that the information is reaching its target audience. FECCA received significant feedback that MRC-type organisations, MC/ECCs and multicultural officers can and do play an important role in this regard. Moreover, consultation participants also provided feedback about the role of these organisations and workers beyond disseminating information—FECCA heard about the assistance that multicultural support workers provide in informing CALD clients about services, how they assist in orienting them to Australian systems, how they promote a sense of community and inclusion, and how they assist clients at the point of actual service delivery.

At the start of the section, there was a discussion about whether consultation participants knew about different services and different service areas. However, if participants knew about a certain service, it does not automatically follow that this is because the service provider itself is effectively advertising its services to CALD clients. Rather, there were many cases in which consultation participants said they knew about certain services only because they had been informed by a multicultural worker or a local ECC-MC-MRC-type organisation.

For example, a female community member at the Ballarat consultation said that she was informed about health services, but only because the BRMC had greatly assisted in informing her on all relevant services. Similarly, when discussing with a group of women at the Auburn consultation their knowledge of women's health services (such as through BreastScreen and the National Cervical Screening Program), it became apparent that the high level of knowledge was due to the fact that they were all part of ADSi's Healthy Women's Group (see *Good Practice 1* on p. 29). It was the same story in Cooma:

"We need people like [multicultural worker in Cooma] to tell us where to go, and about what we can do and to give us support. I wouldn't like to have walked into Cooma's Centrelink office by myself—I wouldn't have known what to do. When you go to Centrelink you have to fill out a lot of forms and they ask a lot of questions, and you don't feel confident answering them." (Cooma)

Good Practice 1: Chinese Community Healthy Women's Group, Auburn

Who? Auburn Diversity Services Inc. (ADSi), a community based, not-for-profit organisation addressing the needs of local migrants.

Where? Auburn, NSW

Funded by? Families NSW

What? ADSi organises sessions and programs for different CALD community groups. The Chinese Women's group consists of female mandarin speakers, mainly over 40 years old. ADSi organises a series of talks/programs about health tailored for these women to raise awareness on issues such as breast cancer and pap smears. A trained, mandarin-speaking health professional gives talks to these women, allowing for a question and answer session at the end of each talk. Through these sessions and face-to-face consultations with ADSi staff, feedback received is then used to improve future sessions and plan the topic of the next sessions. Direct communication of feedback is very effective as most of the women are computer illiterate.

This focus group has similar counterparts for Auburn's Arabic and Afghan communities. A similar policy outline is followed for these groups, though the program itself is tailored to the different needs and issues of each CALD community.

How does it reach the CALD community? Information about these programs is distributed through hard copy flyers and posters at ADSi, as well as through word-of-mouth.

How does it help the CALD community? As the first point of contact for many immigrant groups is other immigrants already settled in a particular area, community groups provide an excellent bridge between the new immigrant population and the Australian community. Thus, these programs help to spread awareness about services available and also assist in adapting to a different system of life. The way information is communicated and feedback received is effective as the community women's group uses direct communication as the women in that group are computer literate and may not understand the telephone operator systems.

In the next chapter there is a discussion about feedback received on the complexity of processes for accessing services, particularly in relation to forms. In this regard, many consultation participants at the Auburn consultation spoke of how they had trouble with the process for applying for public housing and trouble finding assistance there, and subsequently sought assistance from ADSi.

In other cases, participants gave feedback about the importance of having a multicultural worker to go to as an initial face-to-face assistance point. For example, a female participant at the Cooma consultation communicated that:

"Having a support person face-to-face where people can go to say—I'm looking for a job, I don't know where to start—so many people when they arrive in a new country—a new language—a new culture—to have a support network—in this community the MAGIC group—is very important. " (Cooma)

In other cases, the value in such workers and organisations lay in creating a sense of inclusion, building a support network, and feeling like one had a place to go where they would feel supported. This came out particularly strongly at the Cooma consultation.

"They don't know what it is that needs doing, they quite often do the wrong thing – often with CALD people – and therefore they need a support circle like the MAGIC group just to help them with their problems and be there for them."
(Cooma)

"We are reliant on a young women who gets paid for five hours a week, and volunteers the rest of her time, to support people from multicultural backgrounds. The government needs to be putting the resources in to put those supports in place." (Cooma)

"It emphasises the importance of having somewhere where people from CALD backgrounds can come, where they're not going to be treated like they're stupid."
(Cooma)

While, overwhelmingly, comments on this issue were about the value of multicultural workers, FECCA continued to receive feedback about the need for ethno-specific services. One young female community member at the Ballarat consultation explained that she hadn't heard about any services for Iranian people:

FECCA heard about different experiences at its consultations in rural and regional areas as compared with those conducted in urban areas. In rural and regional areas, participants spoke of everyone knowing everyone given the size of the community. For example, the one part-time multicultural worker in Cooma explained that she knew almost every baby who was born to a woman from a CALD background. This suggests that it might only be necessary for one or two full-time multicultural workers to be funded to know and be able to assist all CALD clients in very small communities.

It was also emphasised to FECCA by participants at Cooma that in rural and regional areas where there are fewer CALD Australians and smaller established communities, multicultural workers play an important role in building community integration and social inclusion.

**"There isn't information for us."
(Ballarat)**

1.7 Centralised information and assistance source

"I think the major issue is access to information...My question is, where can we find those information. Are they basically sitting on the webpage of Multicultural Australia or do we have flyers to come to a place like this where people actually come through...and they can get flyers and maybe that will stimulate interest in knowing more about what's out there. Basically, where can we find information?" (Ballarat)

Consultation participants told FECCA clearly about issues in finding information on services. For example, one female survey respondent said she found it difficult to get the right department or service to the issues faced. Another noted that information about services were scattered and the eligibility for these services were not always clear.

A female survey respondent cited some of the potential problems that occur for new immigrants in the absence of a centralised information point:

"There isn't a comprehensive starting point for new immigrants to refer to get information about their new country, its laws, its systems, its services. They have to rely on friends and/or relatives and in doing so risking to miss out on a lot of things and also have a lot of misconceptions and ultimately not become fully engaged but remain somehow marginalised." (survey response)

A central information point would also prevent people from being referred from agency to agency in error before finally identifying the agency they needed, another issue that was raised during FECCA's consultations.

Consultation participants overwhelmingly agreed that many Government services are not visible, that there are differing—but often very low—levels of information about the different services available communicated in a way that is accessible to CALD clients, and processes and systems are complex to navigate. The clear recommendation from CALD clients communicated to FECCA was therefore that there would be great value in a centralised source of information about all Government services, eligibility, processes, rights and responsibilities. It was suggested that there should be one central place where everyone could find out about the full suite of Government services in languages other than English. The central place should be user-friendly with the necessary mechanisms in place to support people without computer access or literacy in their own language.

In addition, particularly in relation to new arrivals, a number of participants suggested the need for some kind of 'welcome pack' in a non-digital format that provides information about Government services in languages other than English:

Several participants criticised the lack of a central point at which to find information about Australian services, processes and systems. For example, one survey respondent said:

"I think it's difficult to navigate the 'systems' & 'processes' of Australia's various Government services. All services are available as separate entities and are not gathered together in one place or hub or via one online portal." (survey response)

"Why don't you have a welcome pack for new arrivals from a 'multicultural' background. In this welcome pack we can find every communication that we should be aware of. At least we can see there the options that we have. Most 'multicultural' people that arrive in Australia don't have any connection to the internet, so it's still not accessible so paper information is very important. (Ballarat)

Another participant in Perth suggested that all people who arrive in Australia, including those who speak English, should be provided with a package related to all the services, rights, information and culture. Differences in systems, laws, rights and responsibilities even between two English speaking countries can be very pronounced, something which highlights the *additional* barriers faced by those also confronting language barriers.

FECCA is aware of DIAC's 'Beginning a Life in Australia' publication, which is intended to assist new immigrants. While this publication is very comprehensive, it is not accessible to new immigrants and refugees or CALD people without computers as it is currently only available online as a PDF document. Moreover, the document is not easily found—it is hidden amongst the DIAC publications and does not have its own page and nor is there any indication on the main webpage that such a document exists. The comments above would also indicate that this publication is not distributed to everyone who arrives.

FECCA's view is that both a welcome pack and a centralised information point would assist CALD Australians. In relation to the first, some kind of welcome pack in paper format and/or perhaps delivered verbally as a CD-ROM or DVD (to cater to those who are not literate) seems highly necessary for people who have just arrived to Australia as a way of orienting them to the new system and culture in which they find themselves. An easy solution is to have hard copies of the 'Beginning a Life in Australia' publication printed in hard copy and distributed to immigrants when they first arrive in their language. In the past, it appears that this was printed but since halted due to the numerous links to webpages in the document. Despite this limitation, FECCA considers that the hard copy publication could also be left at CALD community centres and strategic service providers such as Centrelink, Medicare and JSA to reach out to the CALD community already here but who are still unaware of such information.

FECCA RECOMMENDATION 1

FECCA recommends that the Australian Government, via the Department of Immigration and Citizenship, arrange for its publication 'Beginning a Life in Australia' to be translated into languages other than English, printed and distributed to Government and non-Government organisations.

FECCA also agrees that a centralised source of information on all Australian Government services, personal rights and responsibilities and processes and so forth would be useful for CALD Australians, especially new arrivals. FECCA is aware of the www.australia.gov.au website, but this website does not include any information in languages other than English, and it appears from FECCA consultations that this

website is relatively unknown. The www.australia.gov.au website is an excellent source of information in English, and its content suggests it was developed as a resource that could assist people who had recently arrived in Australia. However, without providing this information in languages other than English, it has limited usefulness. FECCA suggests that the www.australia.gov.au website should be translated into at least fifteen languages other than English. The languages chosen should reflect both prominence amongst current new and emerging communities and need (languages where speakers often have lower than average English skills).

FECCA RECOMMENDATION 2

FECCA recommends that the Australian Government develop a centralised information port for new arrivals. An idea starting point would be the translation of the www.australia.gov.au website.



2. Difficulties accessing Government services that affect all service users

This chapter addresses challenges facing CALD Australians that also affect other Australians seeking to access Government services. It details some of the frustrations expressed to FECCA during the consultations that also affect other groups of Australians regardless of cultural and linguistic background, such as people on low incomes, women, people living in rural and regional areas and so on. However, this chapter argues that what are sometimes considered *mainstream* service issues cause compounded difficulties for CALD Australians because of the intersectional challenges they face concurrently. This chapter shows that any gap in Australian Government service delivery may cause distinct problems for the wider population, but multiple and complex problems for CALD Australians. It dispels the argument that CALD Australians will automatically benefit from overall fixes, rather suggesting that targeted interventions are required to address the complexity of the challenges facing CALD Australians.

The chapter first addresses the difficulty of navigating Government procedures and structures. To illustrate the way in which CALD Australians experience a broader and more complex range of difficulties when faced with any Government service shortfall, this chapter provides a detailed example of how a seemingly simple application process can cause a recent immigrant to encounter a range of barriers. The example shows how the compounded effect of a potential lack of systems knowledge outlined in Chapter 1, alongside CALD-specific challenges which will be outlined in Chapter 3, combine to magnify what may be a straightforward problem for another Australian into a complex set of issues for a CALD Australian.

Having established that service delivery issues are experienced differently by CALD Australians as compared to other Australians, this chapter then addresses some of the wider issues affecting Government service delivery that affect all service users in one way or another. (Any inadequacies that affect CALD Australians *solely* are discussed in Chapter 3.) The issues that participants raised during consultations that also affect other Australians included the need for competent Government service staff, the lack of housing affordability, the isolation of living in rural and regional areas, the difficulties accessing healthcare including mental health services, the specific problems faced by women with families and the difficult overall economic environment.

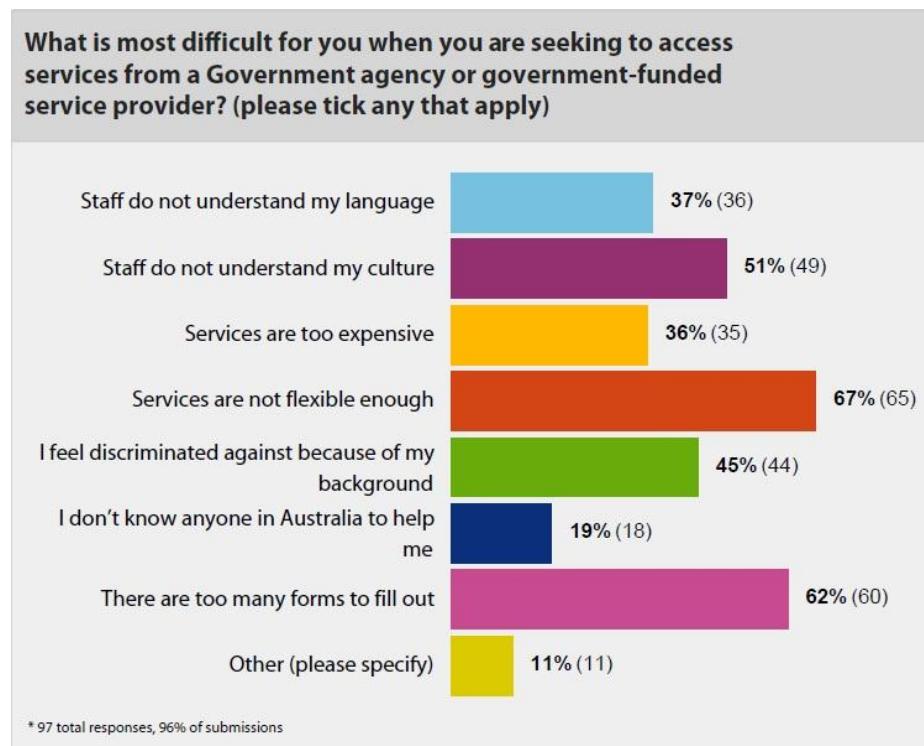
2.1 Difficulties navigating Government procedures and systems

Chapter 1 provided a discussion of the challenges faced by CALD Australians who lack systems knowledge about Government processes. Many such processes relate to application forms and processes, as well as to navigating particular systems.

Application forms and processes

FECCA received feedback through its survey and also at its consultations that application forms can cause problems for CALD Australians at the outset. Figure 2.1 shows that filling out forms was one of the most difficult aspects of accessing services identified by survey respondents:

Figure 2.1



Formal, complex Government forms present difficulties for many service users, including English speakers.

One way to seek clarification in relation to Government services is to contact Government call centres. Of course, this option is dependent on phone ownership, and people relying on Government payments are at high risk of telephone disconnection due to a lack of disposable income and likelihood of defaulting on bill payments. Compounding the risk of a low income earner defaulting on phone bill payments is the difficulty of a new arrival not being able to produce the required identity documentation sought by a mobile phone company to establish a contract in the first place:

"It was the same situation [lacking secondary identity documentation such as bills] for me in getting a mobile phone. I had to ask a friend to get it for me and pay them. You have to borrow from someone and rely on their help." (Cooma)

"Often there's a form to fill in—what's your first name and last name—and often that can't be filled in because they don't have a first name and last name—and there should be more flexibility—more time for individuals." (Cooma)

For those with a phone, without presuming that call centre staff are necessarily trained to respond to complex queries, in most cases, people speaking English as a first language and familiar with Australian systems knowledge would usually be able to find a number to call in order to question a Government agency. Some CALD clients with systems knowledge might be able to navigate such a situation using telephone interpreting services. The effective use of telephone

interpreting services, however, is dependent on the availability and knowledge of the services being available in the relevant language. If such services are not available, or people who do not know about them or how to use them, further assistance is needed. Usually such assistance is sought from friends, relatives or service providers (often non-Government organisations (NGOs) and not necessarily the relevant agency).

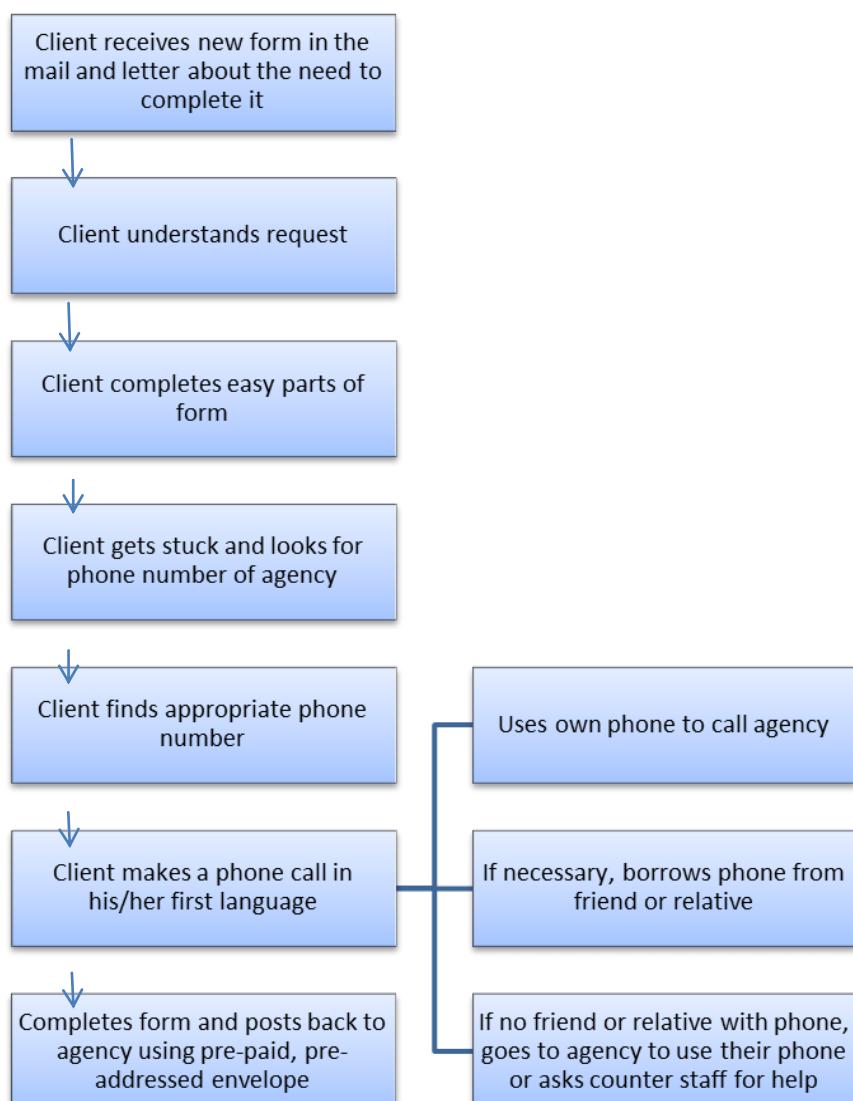
The need to consult service providers places a burden not only on clients' time and compromises their confidence and sense of independence, but also impacts upon Government and non-Government funded service providers. FECCA heard about service providers who have a 'No Help with Centrelink Forms' or 'No Help with Forms' policy, because when they did assist with such matters, the overwhelming number of requests of this nature they received rendered their core services impossible to deliver.

"We can only provide [help with] a simple form. We do not do the Centrelink [form] for example, for one hour, two hours for example, we don't do that. We only do the simple [forms] like one hour or 45 minutes." (Auburn)

Other service providers explained that Government paperwork is difficult for their staff as well as their clients. One service provider in Ballarat also expressed particular concern about the difficulty of housing commission paperwork. She said that people were being referred to centres such as BRMC to assist with clients' applications, but that staff training on how to best and properly assist with such applications was required.

The following flowchart at Figure 2.2 illustrates how an Australian resident who is familiar with the English language and Australian Government processes might respond to a letter in the mail from their state Housing Commission that is seeking updated details and clarification about whether or not the client is still looking for accommodation (a wider discussion of public housing problems is provided at Section 2.3).

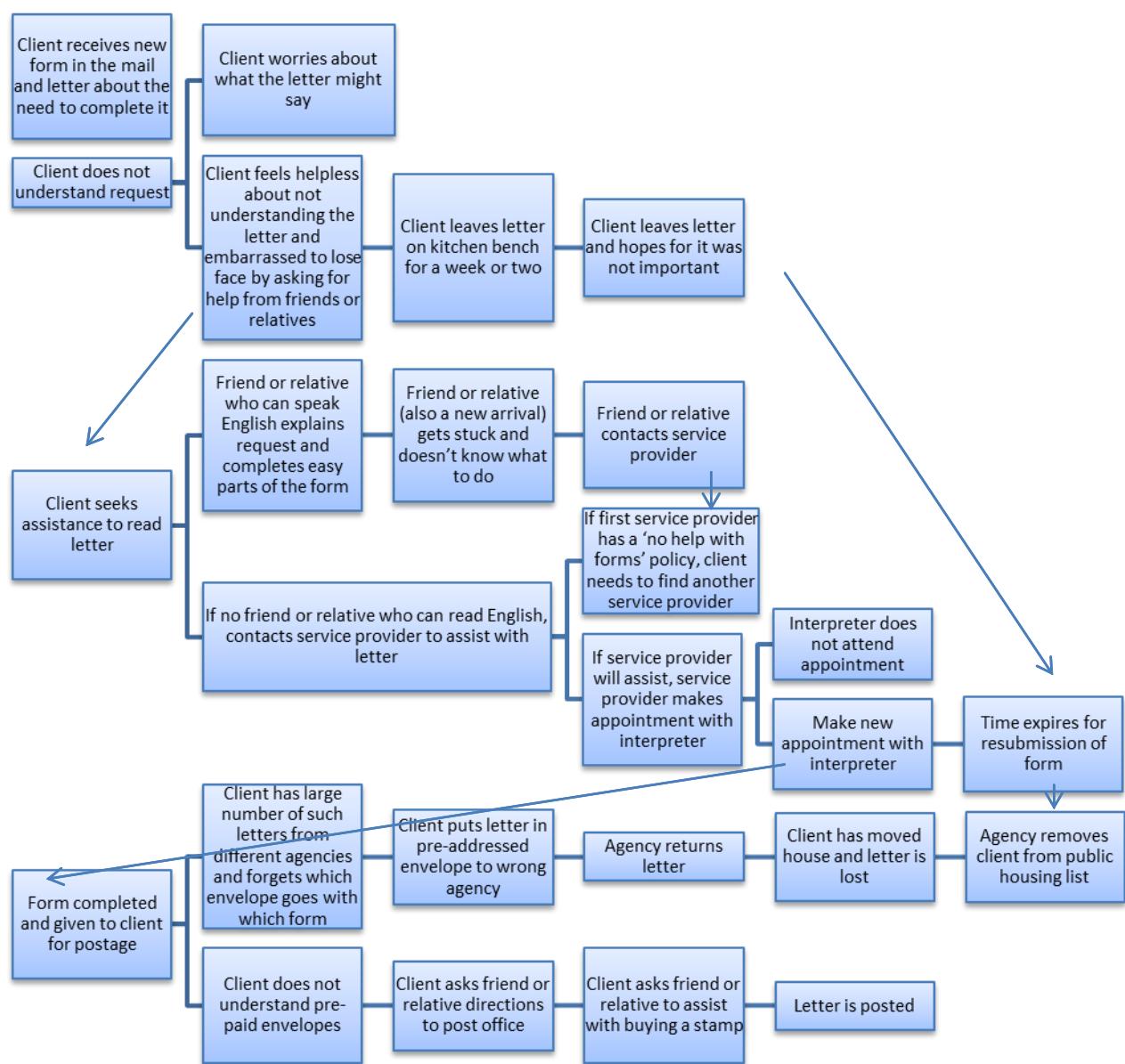
Figure 2.2 Response to a letter from the Housing Commission



The above example shows an annoying and yet straightforward process. For CALD Australians with little English language ability, the process is more complicated.

Instead of the process described in Figure 2.3, the same letter from a state Housing Commission office addressed to a recent immigrant could trigger a process like that shown below in Figure 2.3. While a fictional example, it is based on the experiences of consultation participants around Australia. It demonstrates the greater complexity of difficulties faced by CALD Australians, especially newly arrived immigrants:

Figure 2.3 New immigrants' response to a letter from the Housing Commission



It is clear that a frustrating and yet relatively simple task for an Australian who is familiar with Australian Government processes can become an enormously complex task for a recent immigrant. Further, some of the difficulties described above continue to be experienced by CALD Australians who are not recent immigrants, including people who have limited support networks in Australia and people who are ageing and are losing their English language ability.

Navigating particular systems

As discussed in Chapter 1, systems knowledge is a major factor affecting whether people, particularly recently arrived immigrants, are able to navigate Australia's systems and processes. In some cases, however, even for Australian-born citizens or long-term immigrants, certain areas can be particularly difficult to understand with complex processes. This kind of issue could affect many different Australians, but could also be heightened for CALD Australians dealing with language and other barriers.

FECCA received feedback about a couple of areas that were viewed as particularly difficult systems to understand and navigate. For example, a number of consultation participants described the Medicare system as a difficult area. A female participant at the Cooma consultation, for example, found the bulk-billing aspect of it difficult. A survey respondent described having trouble with receiving a Medicare rebate related to mental health despite having a doctor's referral.

At the Auburn consultation, one group had a discussion about the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS), concluding that they were not sure what the current subsidy arrangements were. The group's discussion reflected difficulties in keeping pace with changes to the PBS system, with subsidy arrangements as well as listed medicines changing regularly.

"When he arrived, when someone arrived the first time, up to 70 prescriptions were free. After that, if they needed more prescriptions then they were free. I don't know, but someone else said vice-versa – you had to pay for the first 70 prescriptions and after that it was free." (Auburn)

Finally, one service provider in Ballarat explained that she cared for a number of humanitarian entrant minors living in the area. She said that it was

extremely difficult to find clear information on the roles and legal obligations of carers, including their formal relationship with other support services. The provider continued to explain that, as a result, carers have to work very hard with other support services to piece together knowledge about the complex system they must navigate. She gave the example of a carer not receiving documentation in the mail until some months after she began her caring role. The speaker attributed these types of issues to a lack of co-ordination at the national level.

2.2 Need for competent and well-trained Government service staff

The difficult processes described above can be made easier or more difficult to navigate depending on CALD clients' interactions with Government service staff. Throughout its consultations FECCA received feedback about counter staff who did not provide information about the full suite of services available to clients, suggesting they were either unaware of such information or unwilling to spend time explaining it. This is not a problem that is specific to CALD Australians, but there is a greater risk of staff calculating the time it may take to explain a particular service to a person with limited English, and deciding not to do so.

Given the discussion in Chapter 1 about the limited systems knowledge of CALD Australians and especially new arrivals, CALD Australians are more reliant on staff to provide information. Staff need to be aware that they may be the only link between the client and all available information about Government services, especially when other information is either provided only in English or is web-based. It is also incumbent on staff to ensure that clients fully understand the forms they sign, and engage interpreter services as necessary.

One survey respondent explained that different Centrelink staff provided inconsistent services:

"I went to Centrelink with clients. My experience is that Centrelink officers do not have the same knowledge regarding people's eligibility of income support. For example, some officers can arrange a woman to see a social worker on the spot when the woman has suffered from family violence so the woman can access crisis payment, while other officers will simply said that the woman is not eligible for the crisis payment and send her away with no further information." (survey response)

One consultation participant (via telephone) commented that, particularly in the healthcare sector, staff seem to be unaware of their option to offer Government-funded interpreter services. She suggested that all public medical staff should be made aware of translation and interpreting options.

A survey respondent felt that many health professionals do not view culturally responsive care as being a part of standard care and patient-centred care approaches. He explained that he had personally observed clinicians disregarding the needs of CALD patients by failing to ensure they properly understood instructions or diagnoses.

2.3 Accessing housing services

Participants at FECCA consultations repeatedly raised the difficulties they experienced accessing public housing. (Due to the plethora of Council of Australian Government (COAG) agreements, and the situation whereby income support levels are determined by the Commonwealth, FECCA questions any suggestion that housing is solely a ‘state issue’.) FECCA acknowledges that the affordable housing shortage is not a problem unique to CALD Australians, as is illustrated by the Anglicare study released in April 2013 showing that of the 56,414 rental properties surveyed:

As in years gone by, the 2013 Snapshot highlights remarkably well that low incomes like government payments and the minimum wage are completely insufficient to cover costs in the Australian rental market...

Regional areas are too expensive for people living on a government payment (0.1-5.8 per cent) and only marginally less expensive for single people living on a minimum wage (4.0-6.3 per cent).

The cities are inaccessible to anyone living on a low income with all household types being able to access less than 1 per cent of listed properties except a couple with children on the minimum wage for whom 4.1 per cent of the listed properties were deemed suitable...

Other work from Anglicare Australia has put a face on the housing crisis and it looks like people going in to debt to pay their bills. It looks like kids and parents going without food because it is the only discretionary item in the budget.¹

Participants at FECCA consultations spoke of their experience of this situation:

“I’m going to give you an example, of my family, my friends. They are, for example, two people who are on the pension. They don’t get more than \$2000. \$1600–\$1800 is just for rent (per month). How are they supposed to buy anything else? What to say! They need to eat, they need electricity, they need a phone, other things... but everything has gone up.” (Auburn)

FECCA agrees with Anglicare that the lack of affordable housing results in a range of problems for all Australians on low incomes. However, for CALD Australians, especially new immigrants, these problems are exacerbated by other, wider difficulties they are facing on a day-to-day basis.

¹ Anglicare Australia (April 2013) *Anglicare Australia Rental Affordability Snapshot*, <http://www.anglicare.asn.au/site/home.php> (accessed 9 May 2013), p. 4.

As discussed above, application processes are particularly onerous for CALD clients. Several participants at the Auburn consultation described NSW Housing Commission processes as complex and circular:

"I think the Housing Commission has a big problem. I came in 1997 and for ten years I was on the waiting list. They make you do a lot of paper work, all these income statements, three months, every quarter or every six months, you have to do these statements. They just make you busy, filling out forms." (Auburn)

"The same thing—he said they arrived in Australia in 1991 and they applied for the housing department. Then, you know, they sent them to Ashfield and they didn't go to Ashfield, they went to Bankstown, then Bankstown sent them back to Burwood, and when they arrived there they removed him from the list and enrolled him in a new list and until now, he hasn't received anything. Each time he goes, they give him a new form and he fills out a new form and they put him again on the waiting list." (Auburn)

FECCA spoke with many participants who had been on the public housing waiting list for a number of years. One service provider explained that short-term services available to people in their initial six months after arrival in Australia meant that people were usually able to find a house for this time. However, she highlighted that there was a three year housing priority list and it was therefore very difficult for clients after the initial six months had passed. Others agreed that six months was an inadequate amount of time to find somewhere to live, let alone develop language skills and find a job.

Another Perth participant noted the compounded difficulties faced by people with disability. She explained that the WA Government theoretically provided houses for people with disability provided they earned less than \$38 000 per annum. However, she stated that available properties were not meeting demand amongst low income earners, and that \$38 000 per annum was insufficient to rent an accessible property in the private market.

Some participants spoke about the types of programs that they felt were filling this gap. A Perth service provider described a current project to establish a 'village' to provide culturally competent support to elderly CALD clients. She suggested these types of initiatives would free-up properties on the wider housing market in Perth and create more opportunities for those seeking to rent or buy.

A similar program was mentioned in Auburn, where the Auburn Council owns a number of units that it provides to seniors.² In contrast with his experience accessing public housing via the NSW Housing Commission, a Chinese-speaking participant explained that the process had been relatively quick. The participant had found information about the program at the public library, staff at ADSi had helped him complete the application form, and his application was processed quickly and housing arranged.

Navigating the private housing market

Unfortunately, the types of programs described above are the exception rather than the rule, and many people on low incomes are forced into the private rental market. This is a direct result of the inadequacy of public housing systems (state governments) coupled with the inadequacy of income support payments (Australian Government):

"He has economic problems, health problems, and the money from Centrelink is not enough to survive with that money, to meet all their needs. Still, what they do, they try to budget the money every fortnight to survive with the money, but still the money is not enough. So they live in hardship..."

(Auburn)

Given the lack of public housing available in Sydney, FECCA heard that even the smallest amount of income could disqualify people from the public housing waiting list.

"He has been seven years in Australia, and he has been in all different places in NSW. He applied to the housing department. After seven years, one of his children has got a part-time job or something. They sent him a letter. They said look, you have got sufficient income. You're not entitled for any housing department house. And they removed his name from the waiting list." (Auburn)

² Self-care units for seniors through Auburn City Council
<http://www.auburn.nsw.gov.au/Community/Seniors/Pages/SelfCareUnitsforSeniors.aspx>

"We are a five member family. Before, it was five people who were not working. Now my wife gets the disabled pension, after that I am her carer. But we still live in two bedrooms. Because we can't afford. Too many times I went to the Housing Commission. I made an appointment and talked with them. They didn't -- they just give you paperwork. Every time you go, a lot of paperwork that you have to bring, from home, from Centrelink, they didn't do anything more. And that's sixteen - twenty years. Last year, they took us off the list. They said, my daughter is working. She only works one day a week because she studies psychology at [a local] university. But that is not enough for us. We can't live. All of the kids are young, we need five bedrooms. This is the main problem for everyone. We can't afford. It's two bedrooms, and \$500 per week. My daughter is at uni, we can't... My son, he does medical science... That's one problem for everyone." (Auburn)

At the Perth consultation, FECCA was informed that Perth residents were living in cars due to inaccessibility of affordable housing. Another participant noted that rental properties changed hands very quickly due to people realising they could not afford the rent or being evicted. An example was cited of tens of families of recent immigrants entering and leaving a single rental property over the course of only 12 months.

Navigating the private rental market is particularly difficult for new arrivals. Some participants in Cooma discussed the problems of identity documentation requirements and rental references:

"When you are newly arrived, it's difficult to know that to apply for houses to rent, you need to have all of the identity points. And then it's hard to find the identity points if you don't have any documents in Australia!" (Cooma)

"For newly arrived people there needs to be a different system, as you have no utility statements, nothing! We relied on a friend, who was leaving her house, who kept the house in her name and we paid rent that way. I know it wasn't the right thing to do, but we had no way to get around it." (Cooma)

Another participant explained that the delay period before eligibility for rent assistance (DHS—Centrelink payment) caused great difficulty:

In many cases, affordable housing is located a long distance from city centres, which exacerbates the isolation of recent immigrants. A number of Perth

"With rent allowance through Centrelink, you aren't eligible when you first arrive and that is the time when you really need help—when you first arrive!" (Cooma)

participants raised this issue, especially in relation to the lack of public transport outside the city centre.

Perth participants noted that the local housing market was inflated by the mining boom and that, in some cases, potential renters bid for properties. One person suggested that CALD people were very unlikely to be aware of such practices.

In line with suggestions from the Australian Council of Social Service and Anglicare, some participants suggested that the only way to address housing difficulties was for the Government to raise the level of Newstart and other social security payments.

FECCA RECOMMENDATION 3

FECCA recommends that the Australian Government increase the level of Newstart payments to better match the reality of the cost of living, especially housing affordability.

2.4 Services in rural and regional areas

It is well documented that rural and regional Australians have less access to services than Australians who live in cities.

"You get into the regional areas, and what you're finding is, one services has to do three or four things. In the city, they're an expert in one area and they can provide quality services. In the country there is less money so our quality is under strain and our knowledge is stretched..."

Another big issue is the transport. If you—most people here—are from Cooma itself—the multicultural group has people from Jindabyne—there's no public transport. It's very difficult for those people to access any services. To get from Cooma to Jindabyne the only public transport is the school bus...

We're all paying taxes at the same rate as people in Sydney or Newcastle, so in that sense we have that entitlement." (Cooma)

One key issue area raised was access to employment and employment services. In some cases, FECCA heard of participants who moved several times to find work, often between different regional areas:

The male speaker described an employment program in Ballarat that operated in 2007 and resulted in the employment of many people. However, since that time, many people had left and sought work in Alice Springs or Darwin to because

"I've been in Ballarat for almost seven years... Access to get employment is a little bit difficult...." (Ballarat)

of increasing difficulties finding a job in Ballarat.

In other cases, participants had moved to rural areas to seek work that was not really appropriate to their skill sets:

FECCA also received feedback about

there often being less diversity in rural and regional areas and the challenges this presents for CALD Australians in those areas where many people have less exposure to diversity and people from different backgrounds. A participant in Ballarat who described his difficulties gaining employment because of this issue suggested that Government needs to engage better with businesses in regional areas to help increase jobs, especially for CALD Australians. This will be explored in greater detail in Chapter 3 in the discussion on the specific challenges facing CALD clients in accessing employment services and securing employment.

FECCA also heard from participants who complained that Government service providers in rural areas were both unable and unwilling to assist CALD clients:

"It is so rare – how often do we have a refugee in Cooma? They didn't even try to find the information. Information is a phone call away. They just said, 'oh no we can't help'. It's the easiest way out." (Cooma)

One young man, who worked closely with the new and emerging community in Ballarat, noted a lack of opportunity for women, youth and children. He suggested that job service providers needed to better engage with needs of these particularly disenfranchised groups and enable them to contribute productively in society. He also noted the difficulties of regional new and emerging communities in applying for funding to support community activities and programming.

FECCA received similar feedback from service providers in Cooma:

"I have applied for the skilled work mentoring program, to come to Cooma, because I had so many people who could have used it – it's a number game. [I had to have] 15 people who could start at one time on one day – it was not flexible. There were not enough. It was very structured – that had to be in place – the English skill had to be that high..."

"What I did as part of training I did last year was I initiated a starting work in Australia mentoring program which was a one-to-one program I did with a Chinese lady I did over a number of months, talking about what happens when you enter the Australian program... It was a casual but a very useful program. I'd like to see more of it. More one-to-one or in smaller groups. Not having to have the 15 people." (Cooma)

"Originally I went to the rural area in Griffith, I started work in a farm. I have no any experience. It was a very heavy lifting job, I received a back injury after one year and I come here, in Sydney." (Auburn)

It is clear that Government services, as well as Government funding requirements, need to be more flexible to accommodate people in rural areas, especially CALD people.

Nevertheless, one service provider noted that there were benefits to refugee settlement in rural and regional areas, because communities were more intimate, and it was easier to achieve collaboration between service providers than in large cities. While this collaboration demonstrates that settlement in a regional area can be positive, another service provider explained how the efforts of settlement workers and organisations in regional areas to welcome and settle new arrivals can be an ultimately futile exercise and result in a loss of investment for the community. He discussed the time, energy and resources that Ballarat spends to welcome and assist newly arrived immigrants to settle, but explained that many immigrants then leave soon after due to problems securing employment or reasonable housing. He viewed this high number of people leaving as a serious loss to the community after the investment that is put in. This demonstrates the need for DIAC to monitor the issuance of visa subclasses that require rural settlement, and ensure that the number of visas issued is matched to the housing and employment opportunities available in rural and regional areas.

2.5 Healthcare services

A range of challenges were expressed in relation to accessing adequate health services. FECCA recognises that Australians from all backgrounds may experience difficulties accessing such services. However, there are unique problems faced by CALD Australians, such as the need for interpreters and translators (see Chapter 3), and the need for medical staff to be culturally competent (see Chapter 4).

FECCA also received feedback that mental health needs were often high in CALD communities but that these needs were not always being met. One service provider suggested that health services were not always aware of asylum seekers' need for torture and trauma counselling. He continued that health services provided under the auspices of the Humanitarian Settlement Services and Settlement Grants Program (SGP), required new arrivals to make counselling appointments within 12 months of arrival. However, he explained that some refugees had not made such appointments in that time due to being suspicious of the service due to not being in line with or familiar to their cultural norms.

Sometimes the past experiences of trauma in immigrants' countries of origin adds to any predisposition to develop poor mental health:

In addition, current wars and conflicts overseas add to CALD people's worries:

"He says there are a few countries like Afghanistan, Iraq, Yemen and Syria, they have problems at the moment. [People here] have a lot of relatives there. All these people here, they worry about them. They feel depressed about that, but they can't do anything about it." (Auburn)

"The people here, they have suffered enough in their country. They have been through many distasteful experiences in their country. [Now] they are here, his expectation is that the Government should pay attention to all these problems and all these difficulties they have been through....

The other thing he says— when he arrived in Australia, he had a lot of worries. He's got mental problems." (Auburn)

While not discounting the range of mental health problems that can be experienced by Australians of all backgrounds, it is CALD Australians who are most likely to have family and friends living overseas whose lives are in danger.

One service provider in Perth explained that mental health problems among CALD communities were often not attended to. She suggested that mental health workers needed to be trained to provide person-centred services that were culturally competent (cultural competency is discussed more broadly in Chapter 4).

2.6 Services for women and families

FECCA received a range of feedback about the challenges for women and families in accessing Government services. While some of the challenges affect women and families more broadly in Australian society, FECCA heard that CALD women have additional needs and encounter specific barriers. For example, one Ballarat participant complained that despite being an Australian citizen, she was unable to receive any family support benefits for her child because the child's father was not yet an Australian citizen.

Child and family support services and payments

Participants' comments revealed that access to family services was impeded by a general lack of information. Other barriers included long waiting times. Another Ballarat participant recounted the hardship experienced by her family while she waited for her

family support benefits to be reinstated after returning from overseas. Given she had qualified for and had been receiving payments prior to the family's travel, it was difficult for her to understand why the process took so long.

Many respondents felt that accessibility of child and family support services was limited by the lack of a sufficient number of providers. FECCA recognises that this issue affects Australian families with young children irrespective of cultural or linguistic background.

Childcare

Childcare was seen as a particularly important issue for women, with accessibility issues negatively impacting on women's ability to productively work or gain education and training. Issues of childcare accessibility raised included difficulties in enrolling children, long waiting periods before access, and prohibitive costs. (A discussion of CALD women's eligibility for certain childcare subsidies is provided in Chapter 3.)

Several participants identified Centrelink offices and TAFEs as places where childcare was required but not adequately available. Given the importance of Centrelink support services and TAFE education, FECCA encourages DHS as well as TAFEs to consider establishing or expanding onsite childcare facilities.

Many participants raised the difficulty of pursuing study opportunities with young children. While this issue may affect mothers regardless of background, recently-arrived immigrants may have less access to informal support systems such as family networks. In addition, as detailed in Chapter 3, recently-arrived mothers whose childcare responsibilities leave them unable to study *English* subsequently encounter additional barriers in other areas of their lives.

Some mothers who had managed to gain childcare qualifications expressed frustration at organisational policy precluding them from working at the same childcare that their children attended. As a service provider explained:

"[Childcare] is one of the popular employment options for Chinese immigrant mothers because they want to look after their children but they have to work to pay the expense of childcare. Working in the childcare can balance both of them. Secondly it is not bad income compare other physical jobs. However, it is really hard to get into the course in TAFE due to many people applying for that particular course." (Auburn)

After finally enrolling in the relevant TAFE course and completing the qualification, it was frustrating for mothers to realise that their long-term plan could not deliver the benefits they had hoped for. This indicates that there needs to be better interaction between education providers and the childcare sector so that students are aware of the limitations of their qualification at the outset.

Women's health

In addition, FECCA received feedback indicating that the healthcare needs of CALD women were often unmet due to perceptions of inaccessibility. When investigated further, it emerged that such inaccessibility was related to healthcare providers ignoring culturally sensitive norms, and women choosing not to return (or go in the first place based on friends' or family members' advice). This relates to the matter of cultural competency amongst service providers (there is a discussion of cultural competency more broadly in Chapter 4). One particular negative experience was the expectation of a male medical practitioner that women would feel comfortable disrobing in their presence. While it is not only Muslim women who may feel uncomfortable about such a situation, a discussion specifically on Muslim women's healthcare needs is provided below.

SPECIFIC EXAMPLE GROUP: MUSLIM WOMEN

A specific issue that was raised more than once was a lack of sensitivity to and respect for cultural and religious sensitivities of Muslim women, particularly those recently immigrated. (Issues of this kind affect many other CALD Australians – for a discussion of cultural competency more broadly, see Chapter 4.)

As above, the area of healthcare and medical treatment came through as particularly problematic. Feedback was given, for example, around the desire to be treated by a same sex medical professional and one participant suggested the use of more culturally sensitive terminology (Cooma, Perth). In addition, a telephone consultation participant described an issue with disrobing procedures used in hospitals in relation to x-rays causing some Muslim women to feel highly uncomfortable and even leading to them no longer engaging in further treatment at the hospital. Obviously, if some Muslim women are experiencing what they feel as discrimination in hospitals while seeking treatment that causes them to be reluctant to return for treatment again, there is a clear lack of knowledge about and response to their cultural and religious needs.

In the area of education, a participant described newly arrived Muslim women often being very sensitive to the mixing of genders in English classes. In order to be sensitive to this, she suggested that Muslim women be given the option to learn in a more comfortably culturally sensitive environment of all females, before transitioning to the mainstream education system.

Especially due to the vital nature of healthcare, medical practitioners need to cater to women's cultural and health needs concurrently. A good practice example of a service taking into account the cultural norms of CALD women and meeting healthcare needs is Ishar Multicultural Women's Health Centre, Perth (see *Good Practice 2* below).

Good Practice 2: Ishar Multicultural Women's Health Centre, Perth

The staff are very 'multicultural' and speak many languages and so clients feel very welcome when they meet someone who can speak their language.

- telephone consultation participant, Perth

Who? A not-for-profit organisation that provides inclusive, holistic and culturally sensitive services for women, particularly those from CALD backgrounds.

Where? Perth, WA

Funded by? National Women's Health Program (directed through the Department of Health); donations are welcome

What? Ishar Multicultural Women's Health Centre (Ishar) promotes health and well-being of women from all backgrounds by having female CALD workers - general practitioners, medical students, midwives, social workers etc. - at the Centre. The Centre provides services including clinical services, multicultural counselling, health education, perinatal support, and home visiting programs. The cost of the services is minimal: either free or bulk-billed by using the Medicare card.

Besides medical services, Ishar also provides a range of community services such as programs for carers, older CALD women, multicultural playgroups and family services. Ishar also organises events for the wider community such as Harmony Day.

Ishar is also an avenue for women from CALD communities to gain valuable work experience by volunteering for placements at the Centre.

How does it reach the CALD community? Ishar's bi-lingual workers engage with their respective communities in their own language to inform women of the services available. Ishar's newsletters and website also offer comprehensive information of the different programs and services.

How does it help the CALD community? Ishar provides an essential health service that is culturally sensitive to the needs of migrant CALD women as the staff is very multicultural and can speak the languages of the CALD communities in Perth. As the cost is low and the health service is accessible as there are no language barriers, Ishar is an effective centre that caters to culturally sensitive CALD community needs.

One survey respondent commented that whilst women's health services and programs could be very good, they were too limited in number. This limited availability was particularly pronounced in rural and regional areas. Specific examples raised included the lack of trauma counselling services outside of the closest capital city, and the regional Crisis Centre having insufficient capacity to assist a CALD domestic violence victim and instead assigning her case to a service provider in the closest major city.

FECCA RECOMMENDATION 4

FECCA recommends that the Australian Government give priority to supporting efforts that promote the cultural competency of health professionals in order to more effectively address women's healthcare needs.

Domestic violence

Participants at FECCA consultations also discussed responses to domestic violence amongst CALD communities. One difficulty raised was the risk that knowledge of Australian laws could be lower amongst CALD women than amongst other Australian women. Another difficulty raised was the risk of Australian doctors failing to understand the manner in which CALD women talk about domestic violence, and subsequent inability to identify their experience as violence. One survey respondent criticised her doctor for not explaining that under Australian law she had been domestically abused, even though the client had hinted at her situation.

Sufficient and appropriate support for CALD victims of domestic abuse is very important, but difficult to obtain. One Cooma participant highlighted this by questioning what would happen if a CALD woman who had been domestically abused could leave her husband but could not obtain social support:

One participant in Cooma explained the particular reluctance of some CALD women to leave abusive home conditions:

"What if she is able to get legally away from her husband, what then?" (Cooma)

"...to take steps against that man who brought you to Australia into a better life—or that you feel, he's my husband, even if they think it's unbearable." (Cooma)

The difficulty of addressing domestic violence in rural areas was also raised in FECCA consultations. One participant suggested that ‘things mostly go unreported due to privacy or things getting too hard’. Another participant explained that there was often only one solicitor in small towns, and divorcing couples could not attend the same solicitor.

2.7 The backdrop of a difficult economic climate

Finally, participants accept the reality that the current economic climate makes things difficult for Governments and citizens. Due to their and their parents’ life experiences, CALD Australians often have an awareness of the world beyond their immediate surroundings, and recognise that the problems they face are not unique.

The Dari speaking group at the Auburn consultation discussed the challenges for Government service delivery in the current economic climate:

“Many of the problems of the world stem from the global financial crisis. Of course, a lot of Governments that we see on the news every night—like Greece and Spain and Portugal—there are problems, there are demonstrations, there are protests. The only solutions Governments find is to introduce austerity, to make things difficult, to cut services, to cut budgets. That’s the only way the Government thinks. Can’t the Government find positive ways, better ways, than austerity, other than cutting the budget?” (Auburn)

Nevertheless, the view was expressed that these kinds of cuts have the most impact on the people with the least means:

“All the different problems - whether individual or societal – all of them are related to standards of living. For example, in the last few years, life has become more difficult. Housing prices have become more expensive, in one week someone has to pay \$500 to a pharmacy...

“The price of everything at the shops: food, clothing, electricity, has gone up. And especially, something that is very bad, is income, for people who have a disability or is on the pension, it's \$800 dollars or worse. \$800. What are they supposed to eat?” (Auburn)

Evidence from the 2011 Census adds weight to the argument that Dari speaking people may be more affected by inflation and cuts to Government services due to falling into lower income brackets:

Most Dari-speaking households (15.2%) earned \$600-\$799 weekly (\$31,200-\$41,599 annually), while the majority of households across the nation (12.6%) earned \$1,500-\$1,999 weekly (\$78,000-\$103,999 annually).³

Many Australians provide financial as well as practical support to their family members. In the current economic climate, such family members may require additional financial support. This includes recently-arrived immigrant Australians, who also support their families here or overseas. The perception by family members living in developing countries that the Australian dollar's high exchange rate means that people living in Australia have no financial pressures causes particular stress to family members living here:

"Even some of these people who are living only on the unemployment benefit, they are trying to help their families overseas to survive." (Auburn)

In some cases, people who are used to famine or war situations live so frugally here in Australia that they are able to send money home. However, this can come at considerable cost to their own ability to attain social inclusion here. Service providers need to be aware of such situations, and not to criticise CALD Australians for their financial decisions. Rather, they should be aware that such unselfish traits will benefit Australia long-term. For example, following the 2011 Queensland floods, the QLD Multicultural Development Association was able to mobilise quickly 120 volunteers from nine new and emerging communities to volunteer their time and energy to help with clean-up efforts.⁴

³ ABS Census 2011, SBS Census Explorer – ‘Dari speakers’ compared to ‘All of Australia’, <http://www.sbs.com.au/news/census/> (accessed 8 May 2013).

⁴ Submission by the Multicultural Development Association QLD to the Queensland Floods Commission Inquiry 2011, 4 April 2011, <http://www.mdainc.org.au/sites/default/files/mda-submission-to-qld-floods-commission-of-inquiry-2011.pdf>, pp. 5–6.



3. Practical issues specifically facing CALD clients

This chapter discusses feedback related to some of the practical issues that are faced specifically by CALD clients seeking to access Government services. In contrast to the previous chapter which explored factors making Government services difficult to access for everyone, but particularly for CALD Australians, this chapter addresses issues faced by CALD Australians that do not impact any other Australians.

The chapter first notes the interaction of language barriers with all elements of effective Government service delivery. It then discusses challenges arising from a mismatch between eligibility for and need of Government services in certain visa classes, and the problems facing newly-arrived immigrants who lack documentation such as identity paperwork and Australian rental referees.

CALD clients face a range of specific issues using Government services to gain education, training and employment. Such issues include needing to learn English and undertake training upon arriving in Australia, encountering difficulties transferring previously gained skills and qualifications, receiving responsive support through employment services, and facing a business community that is at times less willing to recruit CALD workers, including due to what is perceived as racism and discrimination.

3.1 Language barriers

Many CALD Australians speak English as a second, third or subsequent language. As a consequence, some CALD Australians, such as first generation immigrants and humanitarian entrants, do not speak English well. This is one of—if not the—most central issue that specifically faces CALD clients when it comes to accessing Government services. The challenge for Government is addressing and defeating this

challenge; the Australian Government's Access and Equity framework clearly articulates that Australians should be able to access Government services regardless of their first language.

Language can be a barrier to a CALD client at all stages of engaging with Government services—from knowing about them in the first place, to actual use of the service. It encompasses knowing about and using a translation and interpreting service that may or may not be functioning, accessing the service itself and understanding and being understood in the process. Indeed, FECCA received a substantial amount of feedback, particularly through the survey, about difficulties people had in communicating—both understanding and being understood—due to low English levels.

Feedback from the consultations also suggests that responsiveness to the language barrier facing many CALD clients, for example through having staff who speak a client's language, is highly important in helping CALD clients to access services effectively.

Given its centrality, the discussion of how language interacts with Government service equality and accessibility is dispersed throughout this Report.

Chapter 1 includes a discussion of the feedback received in FECCA's consultations about the way in which CALD Australians can be prevented from knowing about government services due to there being limited or no information in languages other than English that is accessible to the CALD clients at whom it is aimed. This Chapter, in Section 3.3 on employment, education and training, discusses the experiences of consultation participants in learning English in Australia through Government-funded English language classes. Chapter 4 includes a discussion of how Government services respond to the fact that many clients do not speak English well and what mechanisms there are in place to assist non-English speaking clients to access services in an effective way.

3.2 Visa type determination of eligibility for services and pathways to employment

The range of different visa classes and corresponding eligibility for services is highly complex.

Views expressed during FECCA's 2012-13 consultations indicated that a high level of confusion exists within immigrant communities, and even among service providers. Several comments revealed the erroneous view that *all* skilled visas are 457 visas, and displayed ignorance of other skilled visa subclasses, some which are now closed, such as 175 (not sponsored, skilled), 476 (temporary, qualified from specified overseas educational institutions), 485 (skilled graduates of Australian education institutions) 495 (skilled, regional) and so forth.

One service provider in Ballarat commented on the issue of ‘people receiving 457 visas’ coming to regional towns where there is not actually any suitable employment for them. His view was that such people should either receive better support, or not be granted 457 visas in the first place, as the current situation was very hard on their families.

The above comment illustrates the confusion between 495 (which has now been closed by DIAC) and 457 visas. As well as causing ill-informed media comment, this confusion causes problems when holders of particular visas find that they are ineligible for particular services. Some participants explained that they need these services, but are ineligible for them. As one service provider explained:

“...everything is so visa-dependent. Depending on which visa you have, you can access all those wonderful services. If you have the wrong visa... That lady, because of her visa, could not access it [a Government housing service].” (Cooma)

In another example, a number of participants in Auburn indicated they had come to Australia on visa subclass 143 - Contributory Parent (Migrant) Visa. These visa holders recounted their difficulties seeking employment. The interpreter summarised the participants’ views by explaining that participants’ problems arose due to not being eligible to receive Centrelink benefits for a certain number of years [in most cases, two years for most social security payments and ten years for the aged pension] after arriving, and therefore needing to enter the job market but not being eligible for job seeker services. Many participants agreed that this was a common conundrum.

One elderly male participant spoke of his personal experience in the Burwood area where he found a job seeker service which allowed him to search for jobs using the computers belonging to the service provider. However, when the service provider realised he was a subclass 143 visa holder the assistance was withdrawn.

While the information provided by DIAC is clear that there is a waiting period prior to eligibility for Government benefits, such information does not mention the issue of access to job seeker services. Given these people cannot receive benefits it seems necessary to at least provide access to services to assist in finding a job, and FECCA’s consultations indicate that people come to Australia with the expectation that basic job service assistance will be available (such as internet access).

In addition, FECCA considers that DIAC needs to reconsider its information distribution mechanisms about the rights of persons holding certain visas. Such information needs to be provided more effectively overseas (prior to entry to Australia) as well as being more effectively distributed to visa holders and their sponsors, families and friends in Australia.

Some service providers and clients considered that eligibility for services should be determined by service providers, rather than centrally by DIAC based on visa class.

Other participants raised the misuse of certain visas by employers. One service provider in Ballarat expressed concern that some people on 457 visas were being made to do jobs they were not supposed to be doing under their employment contracts, which might in some circumstances be damaging to their health. Another Ballarat participant suggested that, in the context of the economic downturn, skilled migrants in Ballarat have often been the first to be let go, particularly motor mechanics, diesel mechanics and other trade qualified people. Having said that, the same Ballarat consultation participant also provided feedback on positive examples of skilled migrant employment in Ballarat. He described this as being due to the Victorian Government's successful skilled migrant program that he described as pairing skilled migrants with positions in certain sectors/businesses in the Ballarat region, including pharmacies, the IT sector, Ballarat Health Services, and the University. He understood, however, that the program would be discontinued.

Other participants noted concern about visa rules, and the need for Government services to keep pace with any such changes. For example, one Perth participant was worried about the 2012 Government announcement about lowering the English requirement for 457 visas. He noted two reasons this was worrying—the possibility for people to be exploited and the possible emergence of occupational health and safety (OHS) issues if people didn't understand the rules and requirements. He suggested, therefore, that if the English language requirement was lowered, there would need to be training delivered to people on 457 visas both to increase their English language ability and their systems knowledge including of OHS rules.

The recent Government policy to restrict the working rights of asylum seekers was also discussed. Some case workers in Ballarat raised the impact that the policy was likely to have on the health and well-being of asylum seekers, and their long-term outcomes for settlement. Another Ballarat service provider discussed those community-based asylum seekers who *did* have the right to work (presumably due to having arrived prior to the implementation of the no work rights policy), stating that some asylum seekers had been given the 'very poor advice' by Government case workers to apply for an ABN, allowing them to be hired as contractors, rather than as employees with the associated entitlements.



3.3 Needs of and barriers faced by CALD clients in employment, education and training

Accessibility and equal outcomes in relation to employment services was identified as a focus area for this year's consultations. In fact, it did not take much prompting to ensure consultations included a discussion on employment—it is clearly a highly important area for CALD clients, not surprisingly given the foundational role employment plays in being able to live and build a life for oneself.

While there was significant discussion specifically on the Government services available to assist people to find employment, the feedback received at the consultations also incorporated a broader discussion. Some new arrivals to Australia do not speak English or have skills and qualifications so first need to access Government programs and courses to learn English and build their skills before being able to secure employment, and also more broadly to facilitate their ability to participate and be included in Australian society. Other new arrivals do have previous qualifications that they want to transfer and need to engage government services to do so. And beyond them seeking assistance from employment service providers to try to find a job, feedback suggested the need for government to play a broader role in engaging with the business sector to promote CALD employment and eliminate discrimination and racism before it will be possible to achieve equal employment services outcomes for CALD Australians.

Education and training needs of new arrivals

Many new immigrants to Australia arrive without being able to speak English and without prior skills or with skills that cannot be recognised here. In these cases, they need to learn English, build skills and/or re-skill. In the first instance, they need to know the types of certification required by Australian employers:

Building skills, and gaining formal recognition of such skills, is crucial to being able to secure a job.

Learning English is also crucial to being able to go on to secure a job. But it is also more than that—someone new to Australia needs English to engage with people, systems and institutions and also to build a sense of social inclusion.

FECCA received substantial feedback through its consultation process about various aspects of services and courses available to learn English and engaged in education and training.

"In Australia, I cannot say that I'm a good cook without having a piece of paper [qualification] to prove it. I didn't know that." (Cooma)

English language classes

Many participants spoke about the services available to assist them to learn English, with particular focus on the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP). Throughout FECCA's consultation process it was clear that most CALD clients that were new arrivals were aware of the 510 hours available to them through AMEP. This is an important first point FECCA acknowledges is positive. Participants at one of the group discussions in Auburn also knew about the additional 800 hours of language, literacy and numeracy training available through the Language, Literacy and Numeracy Program (LLNP), though it was not raised in other groups, suggesting it is less well-known.

Most of the time, the need to learn English was interlinked with the need to get a job; that is, new arrivals said that without learning English sufficiently, they then struggled to secure a job. For example, at the Auburn consultation, a male participant said that most people [humanitarian entrants] who come from Africa do not speak English, and in order to be able to find a job and be competitive in the labour market, need the Government to provide intensive skills training.

FECCA heard from participants across the consultations (including at Auburn, Perth and Ballarat) that the 510 hours of English language classes for which clients are eligible through AMEP was not sufficient for many new arrivals to bring English levels to an adequate level to help them secure jobs.

"Of course it's not enough!" (Auburn)

This came through particularly strongly from people who were refugees or humanitarian entrants. A service provider representative in Ballarat spoke of the frustration of many clients who, after finishing their AMEP classes, were still grappling with the continuing inadequacy of their language skills. Indeed, participants at the Perth consultation suggested the AMEP needs to be redesigned to meet the needs of new arrivals to Australia that are coming not from the traditional 'western' or European countries from which many people came after World War Two, but much more from Asia, Africa and the Middle East, where the languages spoken are less closely related to English and where education systems diverge more from that of the Australian system.

"If you say to someone to come....I will teach you 510 hours and then go and write. It's impossible."
(Auburn)

As noted above, LLNP is an additional option to undertake further English language training. The fact that only one group at one consultation spoke about it suggests it is less well-known or less accessible. Discussions with a TAFE representative at the Auburn consultation suggested that it could be the case that clients had limited knowledge about the course; she

explained that there was an online version of LLNP currently available but described that there were issues in clients being referred to this course from Centrelink and other eligible referrers. It is also possible, however, that clients are not undertaking the course because of accessibility issues beyond referrals from Centrelink; feedback from FECCA's consultations described in Chapter 1 suggested that limited digital and technological literacy was a barrier for many clients in accessing services, so the online format of the course could be problematic.

FECCA also received feedback related to the structure of classes and how the structure was not always appropriate or done in a way to facilitate adequate outcomes. In particular, a group of participants at the Auburn consultation agreed that English language training could be improved for African learners by employing educators from African backgrounds to teach English. Further, he suggested more broadly that teachers from the same community as a group of given students would be best placed to teach those students, as they would have an understanding of how people were used to being taught, their experiences of migration, and their own experience of learning English:

"They suffer together." (Auburn)

Another Auburn consultation participant described what he viewed as two types of English—a high-level academic English and a lower-level simpler English—and the need for teachers to distinguish what students need and are ready for.

"I'm not ready to be taught by the academic English." (Auburn)

"They put them in English class for 510 hours and the class is different levels. So they put people who is high, people who is low...and some of them have never been to school." (Auburn)

FECCA recognises that many of these issues regarding how English classes are structured are a result of the limited funding available to AMEP providers. Increased funding would enable classes to be smaller and for a larger number of teachers to be hired, including teachers from CALD backgrounds.

Participants in the survey and at a number of consultations also made suggestions about the particular things that they would find most helpful to be taught in classes.

Suggestions included:

- focussing the content of the English classes on conversational English rather than spelling and word recognition;
- being taught “real” things;
- having a focus on English that will help in “daily life”; and
- the provision of spoken English CDs to assist people to practice listening at home in addition to reading and writing practice gained from completing worksheets.

Participants at the Ballarat and Auburn consultations as well as survey respondents also suggested that conversational classes should supplement formal English classes. One service provider representative in Ballarat described this as an area with huge demand both because the formal classes were not providing enough chance to practice informally and because there were some clients who could not engage with formal classes due to cultural or family commitments.

Another key issue raised was the difficulty for new arrivals to learn English if they are illiterate in their own language, if they have had limited schooling or if the schooling they did have was in a very different system:

“Our people who come here, they’re confused. They’ve never been to school back home. They come here, they put him in a high level of English.” (Auburn)

Some participants at the Auburn consultation suggested that Dinka speakers who lacked previous schooling should first be taught Dinka and then English:

“To teach them Dinka to know their own mother tongue. That will open the way for them to learn English.” (Auburn)

“There is not enough support for them. For example, from Afghanistan most of the refugees are coming with a non-English speaking background. They’ve never been in a school. They never saw a school building even. How can they learn as fast as the Chinese people, as fast as the European people who come with very good education background? My [suggestion] is to put in extra classes and extra available support that is special for the refugees.” (Auburn)

This goes back to the discussion above about redesigning AMEP to be responsive to the current environment whereby many new arrivals come as refugees and humanitarian entrants and are from Africa, Asia and the Middle East.

FECCA RECOMMENDATION 5

FECCA recommends that the Australian Government increase the funding for and re-design AMEP in the context of the needs of newer immigrant communities by increasing hours and structuring classes in line with levels of English and cultural needs in order to respond to issues of illiteracy and other specific issues faced by refugees and newly arrived immigrants.

For parents—usually mothers—who are looking after children, there can be added difficulties in undertaking English classes. A number of participants raised this as a problem. For example, a female participant in a telephone consultation commented that in her view it was initially easy for women to learn English because they were connected by an officer to the English classes. However, she stated that after the allocated 510 hours, the fees and childcare system became confusing. Other consultation participants did not agree that the initial 510 hours was easy to access; indeed, one participant at the Auburn consultation spoke about his wife's inability to access the initial 510 hours:

A participant at Perth believed there had previously been a childcare

"I had a newborn baby here in Australia. I couldn't find any childcare for my daughter to attend the childcare to give the chance for my wife to go to English classes. In that case my wife couldn't go to English classes for nearly 12 years." (Auburn, male)

program offered alongside the English learning program for new arrivals but that this was no longer available. Given how crucial it is for newly arrived women with children to learn English in order to be able to navigate Australia's systems, care for their family, build social inclusion and enter the workforce, FECCA's view is that AMEP should offer a childcare program and that every effort be made to ensure that eligible AMEP clients are aware of it. FECCA understands that AMEP clients with children under school age are supposed to have their childcare needs funded by DIAC. However, community members at FECCA's consultations who raised issues about not being able to undertake education and training due to child care issues did not mention this so it is not clear whether DIAC is adequately ensuring that all new arrivals eligible for AMEP who have young children are being reached by DIAC and being made aware that DIAC can assist with childcare.

FECCA RECOMMENDATION 6

FECCA recommends that the Australian Government, via the Department of Immigration and Citizenship, continue (or re-commence if it was stopped) to fund childcare for children under school age of new arrivals undertaking AMEP and to review and increase the mechanism to ensure that all relevant new arrivals are made aware of it.

In relation to the Jobs, Education and Training Child Care Fee Assistance (JETCCFA), a service provider representative at the Ballarat raised concerns about 2012 changes to the subsidy that are negatively affecting CALD clients. Following the changes, the subsidy is now only available for women studying qualifications at Certificate II level or higher. While AMEP and LLNP have been made exceptions and JETCCFA is still available for those courses, certain women cannot attend them. These women may be able to attend equivalent courses such as TAFE-provided English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, but attendees of these classes are not eligible for the childcare subsidy. This has caused women not to enrol in any English classes at all. This negative effect of the changes has been brought to FECCA's attention by stakeholders across Australia, including before the consultation process.

FECCA RECOMMENDATION 7

FECCA recommends that the Australian Government amend its 2012 changes to JETCCFA so as to increase the exception categories to include ESL and similar courses as well as AMEP and LLNP, given the importance of facilitating English language competency for all Australians.

It cannot be emphasised enough how important it is that newly arrived Australians are able to learn English. For example, FECCA received feedback from a female survey respondent about her inability to learn English because, while her partner was a skilled visa holder, her own accompanying spouse visa made her ineligible for AMEP or TAFE courses. FECCA is aware of further research on the issue of the spouses of 457 visa holders, such as that undertaken by the Migration Council Australia (MCA), and joins with MCA in urging the Government to address this issue.

Feedback was also received suggesting that the allocation of 510 hours of AMEP should not expire after five years. It is not clear to FECCA why it should be the case that access to AMEP should be timed, given the range of challenges that can impede class attendance, such as having cultural and family commitments. It is also not clear why

partners of people in Australia on certain visas, such as skilled migrant visas, should not be able to access the classes. The Australian Government is committed to social inclusion, and so it should demonstrate this commitment with regard to CALD Australians. An Australia in which systems are designed in a way that could perpetuate social exclusion for particular segments of society is a serious problem.

FECCA RECOMMENDATION 8

FECCA recommends that the Australian Government adjust English class eligibility to be more responsive to need and not be limited by time since arrival or visa class held.

Adult education beyond English language classes

In addition to learning English, many new arrivals need to build skills and knowledge through education and training before they are able to be competitive in the jobs market. Again, the reason for wanting and needing to undertake education and training was largely tied to getting a job, but participants raised issues with undertaking training and still not being able to find employment. As a male participant at the Auburn consultation stated:

This issue was echoed by a service provider representative in Ballarat who said that a large

"If you are trained and after you finish you don't get a job, what is the point of training people? Yeah there are a lot of training institutes, private institutes, but those people who are finished there, they finish without getting a job." (Auburn)

number of CALD immigrants complete Certificate III qualifications, particularly in Aged Care in the case of Ballarat, and expect to get a job once they finish but are often not able to.

Some training courses are provided free of cost, such as those offered in conjunction with employment services. However, many training courses must be paid for. As many new arrivals come to Australia without skills and training, especially those on humanitarian or family visas, the ability to undertake courses in order to be in a position to get a job and contribute to society is highly important. However, several consultation participants, for example in the Chinese-speaking group at the Auburn consultation as well as via the survey, suggested that the cost of adequate training was rising to a prohibitive level. Participants also explained that free courses had limited places and were difficult to get into, which was stopping them and their friends from accessing training. At the Auburn consultation, it was clear that some applicants considered that

they were denied a place due to their immigrant status. FECCA is not suggesting that education providers do discriminate in such a way, but urges TAFE and other education institutions to provide feedback to explain why certain applicants were unsuccessful in their enrolment applications so that these assumptions are not made.

Participants through the survey and at a number of consultations spoke about how difficult it was to undertake training with limited English, and explained that education providers were not responsive to or supportive of CALD clients in this regard. It was suggested therefore that more assistance was needed for people whose first language was not English. One survey respondent suggested that the inadequacy of support services, including support staff, was due to funding pressures facing universities and other providers. It is important for TAFEs, universities, schools and other education institutions to prioritise such support services and, for Government funded education providers to be funded adequately.

Especially when there are no support staff, it is crucial for teachers to be responsive to the diverse needs of their students. A participant in a telephone consultation suggested that some classes are not provided in a way that is sensitive to the needs of recent immigrant or refugees, who sometimes have low levels of concentration. She suggested that classes need to contain more practical material and alternative teaching methods. A participant in Auburn explained that the teachers often did not start at from the basics and assumed knowledge the students had not gained due to past experiences such as coming from a refugee background. Asked what advice should be given to government to improve this, a male participant at the Auburn consultation suggested employing people who had similar experiences to the students so they would know how to teach in a way that those students would understand and to make the information basic for non-English speakers.

He also raised issues about how well the teachers teach students for whom English is a second language:

"They need to slow down, let the people understand." (Aubun)

"The training at TAFE does not assist those who do not have a background in English."
(Auburn)

This is similar feedback to that received in relation to the appropriateness of English language teaching. It is clear that there is a gap in teacher training, both for English teachers and for TAFE teachers, in responding to the needs of CALD clients.

School education

Service provider representatives in Perth raised concerns about issues faced by CALD children who arrive in Australia and enter the school system for school-aged children. One participant commented that CALD children who are illiterate were often being placed into the standard education system. FECCA is aware that there is a three year preparation system in place, incorporating 6 months of introductory studies and a 2.5 year intensive component. However, the above feedback indicates that this does not always happen.

The participant also noted an issue regarding differences between immigrants from 'Western' or European countries and other countries, where children may not be used to a formalised education system. In particular, he suggested that new and emerging communities may have limited familiarity with the formal schooling system as it exists in Australia.

The service provider suggested that as such there is a need for teachers to be trained in teaching children from new and emerging communities, those who have diverse educational experiences. He also suggested that more specialist staff should be employed in schools to assist in assessing the needs of newly arrived children and providing tailored support.

FECCA RECOMMENDATION 9

FECCA recommends that the Australian Government support the learning of newly arrived immigrants by:

- **requiring educators in Government schools, Government-funded TAFE courses to have completed (a) cross-cultural communication and (b) teaching ESL units;**
- **encouraging TAFEs and other learning institutions to provide feedback to unsuccessful applicants for courses to increase transparency and diminish the perception of discrimination; and**
- **ensuring Government-funded learning institutions have adequate resources to provide support staff to assist students with particular needs, including students who speak English is a second language. This is expected to be implemented in primary schools as part of the Gonski recommendations but FECCA suggests it should be extended up to TAFE level.**

New immigrants with previous education, skills and qualifications

Australian employers often require job candidates to demonstrate both prior experience and appropriate qualifications. FECCA continues to receive feedback that both these requirements present particular challenges for immigrants. The issue of Australian job experience is discussed below in the sub-section on the importance of gaining local work experience.

As discussed above, some refugees and humanitarian visa holders do not hold education and training qualifications when they arrive in Australia, and need basic training. However, there are also significant numbers of refugees and humanitarian visa holders, as well as immigrants who come under other visa categories, who do hold education and training qualifications.

DIAC works with industry bodies to manage skills recognition processes. FECCA continues to receive feedback that these processes are not fully effective.

Attendees at FECCA's 2012–13 consultations as well as survey respondents reiterated the problems faced by immigrants with regard to overseas skills recognition. FECCA spoke to several people holding overseas qualifications who currently work in low skilled positions, for example as kitchen hands or taxi drivers, in Australia.

"An educated [Chinese] man with a certificate in engineering...had a decent job back home, but cannot apply for an equal job because the certificate is considered as not meeting the requirement." (Auburn)

"I studied environmental science in India at Master's level. It's difficult to understand the education system here as it's totally different to India, and there's not much information to help you out in understanding." (Cooma)

Many other participants were unable to find jobs at all:

One young female client in Ballarat was unable to find any employment after several months of applications, despite having tertiary qualifications and work experience from Europe, due to her degree and references being from overseas. It was only when her eventual employer was willing to contact her references overseas that she was able to secure a job.

There was strong agreement on the rigidity and cost of formal skills recognition. Participants stated that that skills recognition tests are 'very rigid and very expensive'.

"Some Africans, they are educated, they have finished their degrees....and they didn't get a job." (Auburn)

One suggestion at the Perth consultation was that there should be funding made available to take relevant tests, while another person in Perth considered that it would be better to be funded to take the test then pay it back when the person is working and receiving a wage in their profession.

The example was given in Perth of a woman who was qualified as a medical doctor and psychiatrist in her home country but who was not able to practice in Australia due to problems with skills recognition. Ironically, she was able to secure a position at an Australian university lecturing in the areas of expertise. It seems obvious that a system that allows a person to teach but not to practice needs improvement. One suggestion was that there needs to be research undertaken into examine the tests and the overall system to identify any potential improvements.

It was raised that Australia has particularly onerous skills-recognition processes as compared to other developed nations. Some consultation attendees recounted stories of relatives overseas whose qualifications had been recognised.

"In other parts of the world – look to Europe, look to America, look to Canada. They have employed people in their field. For example, German experience or French experience or England experience or American experience—they all have got a job in the right field. A lot of my friends, my relatives, they are in America. Someone was a medical practitioner—still working as a medical practitioner. Someone was a teacher—still working as a teacher. They have given them a job according to their qualifications."

(Auburn)

Other consultation participants raised economic arguments for better skills-recognition and job matching processes:

While FECCA's consultations have raised the issue of overseas skills recognition before, attendees

explained that

such problems are still unrecognised by Centrelink and other service providers:

"Political refugees—most of them—they are qualified. Why they don't introduce a program for them to train them in their field, or something close to their field, for four months, five months, six months. Give them training, and after that, put them in the right job! And use their talents for the government, for the country."

(Auburn)

"I think they think 'alright you're highly qualified, you've got a good background so you're just gonna get in', but I'm from another culture—I'm from another world." (Ballarat)

Many immigrants are highly motivated and are not content to continue to receive Centrelink benefits—they would prefer to find a job. FECCA heard that Government services are not currently supporting them to do so:

"They kept giving me Centrelink money but they are not really helping in terms of what I wanted. Once I spoke to them and I gave them my CV and they said 'ok you are highly qualified, it should be easy'. But then there is a gap with the employers." (Ballarat)

Similarly, a survey respondent commented that he was ‘rejected’ from job application processes here despite extensive international work experience, which prevented him from ‘best contributing and being an asset to Australia’. Another survey participant added that due to the lack of support for skilled immigrants, informal advice was being given to friends and relatives overseas to emigrate elsewhere, ‘Indian doctors [are] being advised not to come’.

Industry bodies that work with DIAC to determine skills recognition processes are endorsed by the Australian Government as having the right to restrict entry to their professions. Given the Australian Government’s commitment to Access and Equity, and its stated focus on ‘jobs, productivity and growth, the Government should require industry bodies to work more effectively with DIAC to make skills recognition more effective. The Australian Government should not continue to endorse industry bodies which fail to report on their efforts to improve overseas skills recognition processes, and are able to list the satisfactory results of such efforts.

FECCA RECOMMENDATION 10

FECCA recommends that the Australian Government require the industry bodies it endorses to report annually on their efforts to improve overseas skills recognition and provide satisfactory quantitative and qualitative data to demonstrate the success of such efforts.

Accessing Job Services Australia and Disability Employment Services

Participants throughout FECCA’s consultation process provided a great deal of feedback about employment services and the issues facing many CALD clients, particularly new arrivals, seeking employment in Australia. The focus on employment was timely given the concurrent inquiry process being conducted by DEEWR to review the employment services system ahead of the expiry of key funding structures in 2015 (DEEWR sought responses to its *Employment Services—Building on Success Issues Paper* in March

2013). While FECCA had already provided a submission to that inquiry before some of the consultations took place, we received very strong feedback that gives FECCA a number of additional recommendations.

Many participants across a number of consultations made general comments about their dissatisfaction with employment services.

"I've been in the job searcher and I never get one job. But when I want to get a job, I get it through friends." (Auburn)

One service provider representative at the Ballarat consultation received such poor feedback about JSA providers' ability to place CALD people in jobs that she hesitated to make referrals:

"We're quite careful about making those referrals because people are often disappointed if they don't, if their needs aren't met and they don't receive services in a way that helps them to navigate the system." (Ballarat)

A participant in a telephone consultation commented that many job service agencies fail to provide full information to clients about the process of seeking employment and do only the minimum to 'get the clients off the list.' A number of other consultation participants and survey respondents suggested that JSA funding arrangements accounted for the poor quality of service provision to CALD clients. The service provider from Ballarat quoted above continued that because JSAs are funded based on the number of persons placed in jobs, they tend to concentrate on candidates that are easier to place. This aligns with FECCA's submission to DEEWR on its review of employment services, which suggested that there is a need for JSAs to receive their funding based on quality of service rather than simply numbers. Currently, JSA providers are awarded contracts from DEEWR based on their services, along with a 'star rating' based on several factors, one of which is the amount of successful employment outcomes achieved by that service provider.

FECCA RECOMMENDATION 11

FECCA recommends that the Australian Government review the 'star rating' system for JSA providers. Such a review should examine ways to reward JSA providers that successfully place people from higher JSA streams in work, including CALD job seekers who have greater services and support needs.

A number of other participants suggested that separate from funding constraints, JSAs lack targeted programs or strategies to address CALD clients' needs. One participant at the Ballarat consultation said that her conversations with people from CALD backgrounds revealed that many people feel as though they are treated in the same way as the general Australian public when interacting with JSAs, when their needs can be different and more acute. Another suggested that job agents lack training in working with CALD clients and thus are unable to address their needs.

FECCA RECOMMENDATION 12

FECCA recommends that the Australian Government increase the cultural competency of JSA service providers. This could be achieved by:

- **requiring Government contract holders to implement compulsory cultural competency training for all staff; and/or**
- **identifying a number of contracts for the provision of specialist services to CALD clients which would be won by service providers with the necessary expertise.**

Another way to approach this, without fully separate multicultural JSA providers would be a partnership between a JSA provider and an MRC-type organisation so that the two could work in partnership to help CALD clients. In Perth, the lack of such partnerships was raised as an issue:

"Lack of specialist agencies and partnerships between JSA and specialist agencies is a major problem." (Perth)

Many participants spoke about specific challenges they faced that JSA services did not seem to understand or respond to. Many people felt that, through the Job Seeker Classification Instrument (JSCI) they had been placed incorrectly in a JSA low assistance stream—for clients with few needs—when in fact they required significant support to address a range of challenges they face seeking employment.

One male participant at the Ballarat consultation explained that he was placed in Stream 1 after being identified as having good English and a good skill set. He was therefore left to apply for jobs without assistance but “*nothing materialised, absolutely nothing.*” Despite this, when he visited the agent at the job services provider or Centrelink, he/she continued to approve Centrelink payments given he was applying for jobs, but not provide further assistance to actually improve his applications:

"They kept giving me Centrelink money but they are not really helping in terms of what I wanted...Once I spoke to them and I gave them my CV and they said 'ok you are highly qualified, it should be easy'. But then there is a gap with the employers. I'm a foreigner; I've got a foreign name. From their perspective no doubt they would rather hire a local. They don't know much about me and there is no added incentive for these guys to place me into a job." (Ballarat)

Several other participants explained that they appreciated Centrelink financial assistance but were much more interested in receiving practical support to actually find a job:

"I went and spoke with [name indicating local employment service provider]. And just like someone has mentioned here, they keep giving you appointment after appointment. But...they don't do anything to help you or to tell you 'look this is where you need to make amends to get something'." (Ballarat)

"They just make an appointment with you and then re-schedule another appointment, without telling you exactly what you need to do to get a job...The job services need to directly engage with the people working with them to get a job." (Ballarat)

He explained that the JSA provider failed to acknowledge the additional challenges he faced, despite his strong English ability and overseas qualifications.

"I think they think 'alright you're highly qualified, you've got a good background so you're just gonna get in,' but I'm from another culture, I'm from another world." (Ballarat)

Some of the cultural differences that new arrivals faced were very specific, and one that stood out very clearly was that Australian employers expect a specific type of resume and job application—particularly in relation to selection criteria—as well as compliance with cultural norms when responding to interview questions. This was in line with the feedback of a service provider representative in Ballarat who said he knew of many instances of CALD immigrants having a good application and good qualifications, but still failing at interviews.

The issue of selection criteria was raised in Perth, Cooma and Ballarat.

"How to do an application – what are selection criteria – never heard of it?" (Perth)

In Perth, one service provider described a recent internal recruitment round in which he received three applications from three different migrants that had not adequately addressed the selection criteria. A female participant at the consultation agreed, saying she had experienced this personally.

The wife of a CALD client at the Ballarat consultation spoke candidly on this matter and lamented that this was not an area where employment service providers assist:

"I speak fairly good English, but somehow my selection criteria is always an issue and I couldn't get a job." (Perth)

"What shocked me at the time as a business woman and someone how hires people regularly was that he was never advised on his resume. Now, when I read his resume, I can tell you I would throw it in the bin. Because there's a cultural difference in the way we read resumes, and nobody ever helped him with that. No one said 'change your interview style.' No one advised him on things like that." (Ballarat, female)

FECCA RECOMMENDATION 13

FECCA recommends that the Australian Government improve services to CALD job seekers by:

- **requiring JSA providers ensure their classifications of job seekers through the JSCL takes into consideration the potential cultural challenges for CALD clients even if their English level is high and they have education and experience; and/or**
- **introducing a CALD and/or refugee specific stream to the JSCL.**

FECCA RECOMMENDATION 14

FECCA recommends that the Australian Government ensure, via JSAs, that all new arrivals seeking work are provided with assistance to write resumes and selection criteria responses and prepare for interviews in the Australian context.

In addition, a substantial number of participants described the inadequate assistance they received from JSA providers despite having limited English language skills. It is

difficult to understand why JSA providers would not have been able to see that more assistance was needed in such cases. Many participants with little English described being told simply to ‘go on the internet or read the newspaper and start looking for a job.’ One female participant at the Auburn consultation who had limited English raised the issue of a lack of interpreter services available to assist in finding a job, and thus the impossibility of receiving feedback following unsuccessful applications. A male participant described his experience:

“They just put them at a table, a computer, and ‘go’, ‘go look for a job’.” (Auburn)

“There is no actual help.” (Auburn)

“Go and look for a job, look at the newspaper.’ People they don’t even read or write. They come from non-English background. They don’t know how to look for a job. They haven’t got skills. How come you ask them to find a job?” (Auburn)

While FECCA is aware that there are certain oversight mechanisms for JSA providers in place, there is obviously something not working given the amount of times CALD clients with limited English reported receiving such limited—and arguably inappropriate—assistance. FECCA will discuss this issue from an accountability perspective in Chapter 5 (see page 106) and make a recommendation to improve JSA assistance to these clients.

A service provider representative in Perth gave feedback about cases where CALD clients were provided with still less assistance. She described a situation she saw during her previous role at an SGP where refugees and humanitarian entrants who had finished AMEP were sent by Centrelink staff to the local employment service provider, but were not provided with any assistance for a number of months if they were not able to write their own resumes.

A number of participants at FECCA’s Auburn consultation described the difficulties of accessing employment services and successfully finding a job as an older person. They explained that the other responsibilities they had, such as looking after their grandchildren and their house, made it difficult to continually apply for jobs as per Centrelink requirements. Further, they described that their low English skills and lack of ‘employability’ as an older CALD person compounded these problems.

Disability Employment Services

Some of the views expressed in this year’s FECCA consultations related to Disability Employment Services. In Perth, one participant raised concerns that many of the providers failed to recognise that people with intellectual disabilities faced different barriers to people with sensory or physical disabilities. This, she suggested, led to incorrect job placements:

"Most providers are funded to provide employment opportunities, but everyone with a disability is put in the same box, so the providers aren't looking for jobs that are suitable for a person's skills." (Perth)

The importance of gaining local experience

"Wherever she applies is, do you have local experience? She comes from India – how can she get local experience?" (Cooma)

Linked to the adequacy of employment services, but somewhat distinct, is the matter of gaining local work experience. This issue was raised at all four consultations by many participants who explained that employers often required a demonstration of local experience before they would consider hiring a candidate, leading to a 'chicken and egg' situation:

"They ask that you have local experience, and it's impossible when you've only just got to Australia!" (Cooma, female)

Many of the participants who raised this issue indicated that they did have experience from their country of origin but that this was not satisfactory for potential employers. As described in the sub-section on new migrants with previous education, skills and qualifications above, the process of overseas skills recognition is not working adequately. Therefore, newly arrived immigrants face the double barrier of slow or non-existent skills recognition as well as the difficulty of gaining Australian experience:

One participant in Ballarat described how helpful it was that his Australian university degree included an industry experience component, which assisted him to secure a job after he graduated.

He suggested that training courses should be designed in such a way as to incorporate practical experience and assist CALD job seekers post-graduation.

"We find it so difficult to get a job because they will tell you need Australian experience. (Ballarat, female)

There are a number of benefits for businesses that employ CALD people. For example, CALD employees may help businesses to connect with the growing CALD consumer base. Bilingual employees can assist not only in everyday interactions with customers and clients in Australia, but also when businesses are involved in importing or exporting goods and services. At the Perth consultation, a female participant identified the organisation *Ishar Women's Health Centre Inc.* as an organisation that employs or provides work experience for many CALD women (see *Good Practice 2* on page 52 in Chapter 2 to read more about the work of Ishar in providing health services to CALD women). It would be good for the Government and employment service providers to

identify and build relationships with organisations such as these and increase CALD clients' work experience opportunities.

FECCA RECOMMENDATION 15

FECCA recommends that the Australian Government support, for example through a funded dedicated liaison officer in different towns and cities, relationship building between employment service providers working with CALD clients and organisations that will employ or provide work experience for CALD clients.

Taking employment services 'out of the box'

FECCA consultations revealed a high degree of discontent with the ability of mainstream JSA services to meet their needs. However, participants also provided details about a range of employment services that were more effective, often in the form of CALD-specific programs. FECCA suggests that the Government should consider the positive feedback received about programs that are CALD-specific, location-specific and engage local businesses, and seek to incorporate these aspects into targeted employment services.

At Ballarat, a service provider representative described a new program, the *CALD Careers Program* (see *Good Practice 3* on page 79). This program increases immigrants' awareness about the type of work available specifically in the Ballarat region, and creates links with the business sector to assist immigrants to secure jobs in those areas. Participants explained that the key factors making this program different from general JSA employment services were: its local, region-specific nature, its links with local business community and its delivery specifically to CALD clients. A female participant at the consultation said she had got a job recently through the program.

Another participant at the Ballarat consultation spoke about a mentoring program that was available some years ago (FECCA was unable to determine its precise name). Through the help of a mentor, the program enabled clients to gain practical experience of OHS principles in action and other practical and functional aspects of workplaces. While this is beyond the scope of mainstream JSA providers, it addresses the lack of knowledge many newly-arrived immigrants have about Australian workplaces.

A third participant, also from the Ballarat consultation, spoke of a program called *Next Steps* funded by the Victorian Government and managed by the Brotherhood of St Lawrence. The participant stated that the program, which facilitates funding and work opportunities for disadvantaged job seekers, can be successful even when other employment services have failed.

Good Practice 3: CALD Careers Program, Ballarat

Who? City of Ballarat

Where? Ballarat, VIC

Funded by? Jointly funded by DEEWR and the City of Ballarat

What? The CALD Careers Program delivered through the City of Ballarat local council works with unemployed and underemployed CALD community members of Ballarat to develop the job specific skills necessary to obtain work in various industry sectors in Ballarat and the region.

How does it reach the CALD community? By working with local businesses on understanding what their current and future needs are in relation to their skilled and unskilled workforces, the City of Ballarat selects program participants with interests, skills (both personal and technical) and the ability to work in the proposed roles. The City of Ballarat then helps the participants to develop a better understanding and knowledge of workplace related skills in addition to providing them with industry specific training as asked by the Employers. This feedback system allows for businesses and the community to interact.

How does it help the CALD community? One of the key factors used in selecting partnering employers is whether employers are interested in giving migrants a chance. This assists the CALD community as the employer meets the needs of the majority of the CALD Careers program's current participants.

The concept and value of local responses to local contexts emerged particularly clearly at the Ballarat and Cooma regional consultations. The employment opportunities in regional locations are different from those in urban locations and require different approaches. In some regional areas, one or more sectors are particularly dominant while there is limited work in other sectors. Participants at the Cooma consultation, described how this could be both a good and a bad thing:

"In Cooma...to continue in employment—Cooma is fairly lucky with that because a lot of CALD people who came to work in the Snowy Mountains scheme—they are continuing to work [there]." (Cooma)

"Coming in from the other end of employment, there's no hydro can't get engineers here, because their spouses can't get work. They have a vacancy of between 10 and 20 skilled engineers – but they can't get them to live in Cooma because there's no work for their spouses...If you want Cooma to expand, the only way you can do that is increase the employment – either by bringing new businesses in, or you bring people in, and they find the jobs! It's a chicken-egg situation, and there's no solution. (Cooma)

Some participants in Ballarat spoke of experiencing such serious and ongoing difficulties finding employment that they moved interstate. Alice Springs was raised more than once as a location of choice, and where it was possible to successfully gain employment. This demonstrates the way in which rural and regional areas different from cities, as well as from each other. Factors making different regional locations different for CALD job seekers could include the available employment services as well as the local economy and job market.

Participants also raised many points about the role that Government could and should play in creating a job market that is accessible to CALD people seeking jobs. It is necessary both to design CALD specific job services, but also to create an environment that enables CALD people to succeed in securing a job after using such services. Some participants suggested that this environment would be fostered by the provision of incentives to business to employ CALD people:

"The solution lies with the Government, whether it's from the federal level or the state level, to give incentives within the employment and business community." (Ballarat)

Another participant suggested that by not providing such incentives to business, the Government was condoning CALD individuals' reliance on social services payments, which would be more expensive long-term:

"...we are going to be a burden to the Government in terms of giving us Centrelink payments. It will just continue like that unless the Government puts in incentives to say employers to employ people from a cultural background and get their employees trained on government funds. Instead of being trained then looking for a job yourself...But if the Government gives incentives to give on the job training, that means there's more of us getting employed but also getting that Australian experience that is needed." (Ballarat)

FECCA heard from a representative of a service provider in Ballarat that provides assistance to CALD youth seeking employment. He explained that while his organisation wanted to engage with mainstream programs being delivered through JSAs, it also wanted to connect with employers. He suggested that the establishment of social procurement practices and social enterprises, could help in this regard. The Australian Government—via DEEWR—or State Governments could lead the way in promoting social procurement and/or offer businesses incentives to engage social enterprises.

Another Ballarat participant described a program at a major Australian bank that trained qualified people from non-English speaking backgrounds to work ‘the Australian way’. She suggested that the Government should talk to banks and other large businesses to encourage them to implement similar programs. She also suggested that the Government should support businesses to make CALD-specific apprenticeship places available. These types of programs provide the crucial ‘first job’ in Australia and enable recent immigrants to gain Australian work experience.

Experience of racism and discrimination in seeking employment

An issue that came through strongly, particularly at the Auburn, Ballarat and Cooma consultations, was the racism and discrimination experienced by CALD people seeking employment. The existence of discrimination in employment in Australia is detailed in a number of studies, such as ‘Does Ethnic Discrimination Vary Across Minority Groups? Evidence from a Field Experiment’ (2011) by Alison Booth et al.⁵ Personal experiences of such discrimination were recounted by consultation participants.

In Ballarat:

“Name means a lot in Australia. You never know that until you come here.” (Ballarat)

“My name is different, I put it on the CV. No matter how good it is, sometimes it’s that prejudice...Mine is a complicated name...I was encouraged from someone in the business community – why don’t you put an English name, change your name, you’ll get an interview.” (Ballarat)

⁵ Alison L. Booth, Andrew Leigh and Elena Varganova (2012), ‘Does Ethnic Discrimination Vary Across Minority Groups?’ *Oxford Bulletin of Economics and Statistics*, 74 (4), pp. 547–573.

"People really need to see us for what we bring, not just the way we look. I think most people will look at you and think you're black, you're not good enough...I want people to see what we bring, the qualifications we have...Even when we go to school here, even when you are re-trained here, even when you get your qualifications from here, they will still not give you the job." (Ballarat)

In Auburn:

"Another problem that we haven't talked about, that sometimes faces Afghans and Muslims. Most of the time when they finish their education and look for a job, they experience discrimination. When someone sees their Muslim name, they won't offer them a job. My son never got any interviews. He has a Muslim-sounding name. As soon as he changed his name, the first job he applied for, he got an interview, and got the job." (Auburn)

Another participant agreed:

"Often many of the people try to change their names – it's quite obvious if you try to apply for a job – I know of 2 Australian community here who mostly the daughters, most of the next generation – changing their name. If I apply and I have a Chinese sounding name, they don't even look at my application." (Cooma)

In Cooma:

"Sometimes I feel like if I was an 'Aussie', I wouldn't have the same problems." (Cooma)

"[That] is absolutely right. That happened to my son [as well]. He finished university. He applied in so many places for a job. Always the same answer—thank you very much, we gave careful consideration to your application, but you are unsuccessful. I told him, you'd better go and change your first name. As soon as he changed his first name, to an English name, the first application he got an interview, he got the job. That's the discrimination. I agree with this. As soon as they see someone who has a Muslim name..." (Auburn)

A different participant in Cooma suggested that employer discrimination was not necessarily restricted to racial discrimination, but also extended to age discrimination:

In response to this comment, another Cooma participant suggested that people from non-English speaking backgrounds do experience additional discrimination:

"I do think that NESB [non-English speaking background] do suffer an additional barrier because if we look in our community...because someone going for a job – their English is not as good as the next person – there must be that – because why do we have people doing admin or low level jobs – who in their own country – are qualified and were a psychologist." (Cooma)

"I think it's way bigger than the name or the language difficultly – it's widespread – it's very hard to get a job for everyone. I have Australian experience, but I still can't get those jobs. I think the jobs are very scarce, especially in that land management...it's very difficult to get a job in that area. Being a woman as well – that land management thing – it's very male dominant - it's age as well." (Cooma)

of Australian about their experiences of discrimination in seeking employment. In talking about how to reduce such discrimination, a participant at the Ballarat consultation discussed the need for community engagement. She suggested that the community needed to be involved and needed to know that non-discrimination promotes positive social integration. "...if we don't engage people, they will be engaged in a negative way."

In Auburn, participants suggested potential actions the Government should take to confront racial discrimination in the workplace:

"First of all, the Government should advise their own departments, not to discriminate people because of their religion, because of their ethnicity, because of their colour, race or these things. Because even though they are Muslims, they are living in Australia! They have Australian citizenship and equal rights with other Australian citizens." (Auburn)

"Nobody can prove it, but they know it exists! All the Government is able to do is just to advise the departments, and the private sector, just talk a bit about the discrimination. Encourage them not to discriminate on the basis of religion or other things in job applications. It's a big and difficult problem, because no one can prove it. You put in an application, and they don't say, 'oh it's because you're a Muslim,' -- they are very polite. But all the Government can do is advise." (Auburn)

In fact, such discrimination has been proven in the form of studies such as the Booth study mentioned above.

The *Racial Discrimination Act 1975* (Cth) includes a general prohibition on “distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin” (s.9) and, moreover, has a specific provision prohibiting such discrimination with regard to employment (s.15). All Australian states and the ACT also have racial discrimination legislation in many ways similar to the federal *Racial Discrimination Act*, for example, the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1977* (NSW) and the *Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001* (Vic). Furthermore, if passed, the *Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Bill* (2012)—which consolidates Commonwealth anti-discrimination legislation—would be another legislative instrument prohibiting discrimination in employment.

However, while there is legislation in place explicitly outlawing discrimination of this kind in Australia, it clearly is not working well in practice if a person with a Chinese or Middle Eastern name has to submit at least 50 per cent more job applications in order to receive the same number of interviews as a person with an Anglo-Saxon name, as per Booth et al.’s study.

The Government must therefore go beyond legislation to address this issue. FECCA actively supports and commends the work of the AHRC’s ‘Racism it stops with me’ campaign. Until this kind of discrimination is eliminated, due to this campaign or other efforts, the Government must continue to act.

Some participants suggested that racism and discrimination were worse in rural and regional areas, partly because cultural diversity in those areas is lower. Therefore, it was suggested that it is harder for CALD people to secure a job in regional locations. A service provider representative in Ballarat suggested that while cultural diversity was increasing and demographics were changing, many employers were still very conservative.

A young female participant at the Ballarat consultation described how she grew up in Melbourne as a person from an immigrant background, and after 21 years moved to Ballarat. She explained her surprise at the discrimination she encountered in seeking employment in Ballarat despite her Melbourne employment experience.

It was suggested by a participant at the Ballarat consultation that this was all the more reason for Government to engage with businesses in regional areas:

“There seems like there is a very big wall if you’re not Australian or don’t speak with an Australian accent, no matter how qualified you are.” (Ballarat)

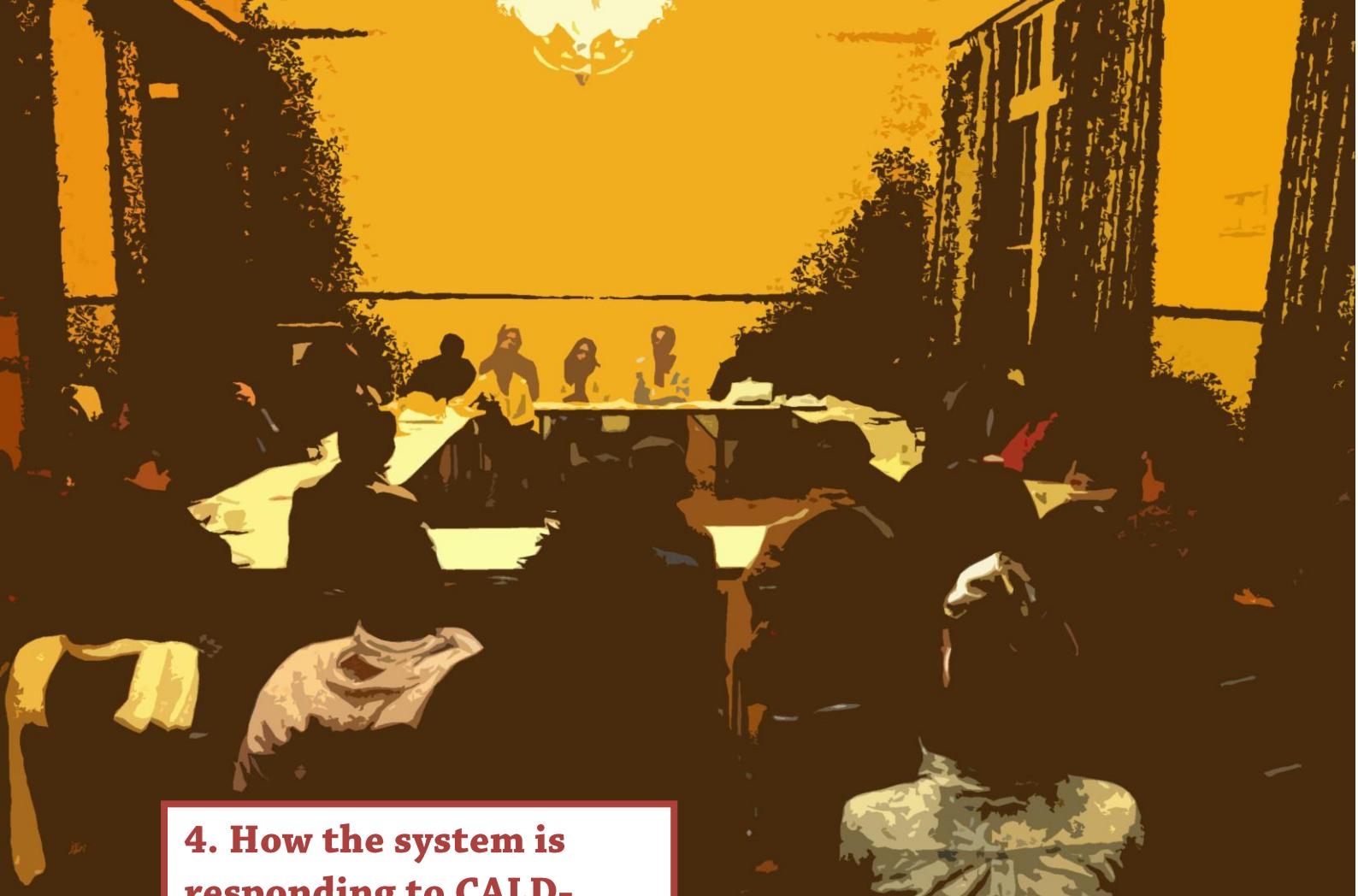
This participant (quoted above) had been speaking about his experiences in Ballarat but went on to describe a different experience in Melbourne where he had received phone calls and been offered interviews following job applications. Responding as to why he thought he was not successful in Ballarat, he suggested:

And as to why he was successful in Melbourne:

**"I don't know.
Because I think
Melbourne is more
multicultural."
(Ballarat)**

"I think one is maybe because you are not white. Two because you don't in the language in a way the Australian can understand. They feel like if you don't speak with an Australian accent...."
(Ballarat)

He described his frustration arising from people saying that they could not understand him and wanted to know what was wrong. He recounted asking people whether it was a problem with his *style* of communication, his accent or whether they felt he was not speaking English (FECCA can confirm that he was able to speak English). This points to a degree of difficulty amongst parts of the Australian population to deal with and be open to people of different backgrounds who speak English slightly differently from themselves.



4. How the system is responding to CALD-specific needs and issues

This section discusses feedback received in FECCA's consultations that related to the way in which Government services are responding to the cultural, religious, linguistic and practical needs of, and challenges faced by, CALD clients. The discussion shows that there were diverse views on whether agencies and service providers have been effective in ensuring that programs and services are fair and responsive to the individual needs of CALD clients.

Consultation participants criticised the top-down approach to service-delivery they had experienced on the basis that it was clearly orientated towards the mainstream. They highlighted that such an approach does not always provide the type of client-focused perspective that has the potential to adequately respond to the needs of Australia's diverse population. The discussion then moves to the feedback provided by clients about their experiences in dealing with employees of service provider departments and agencies and the degree to which staff, at all levels, demonstrate cultural competency. The final two sections focus on the way in which the system is designed to provide assistance that is specifically targeted at CALD clients—firstly, regarding staff and organisations that are ethno-specific and secondly, concerning how the system provides assistance to overcome language barriers that many CALD clients face.

Incorporating an understanding of cultural diversity into policy design and service delivery

Given the cultural diversity of Australians, it is crucial that Government Ministers and senior policy makers view multicultural Access and Equity as a standard and essential element of Government service delivery. More importantly, this commitment to Access and Equity needs to be present not only at the highest levels, but entrenched throughout the machinery of Government, down to services provided to clients at counter-level. As noted by one survey respondent, Government employees who are impatient with CALD clients and are unwilling to take extra steps to facilitate effective communication, clearly do not regard Access and Equity as a fundamental standard to guide their conduct. This illustrates the failure of strong policy stances at high levels to filter down to coalface service delivery.

Throughout FECCA's 2012-13 consultations, participants provided a range of feedback concerning this issue. Some participants advocated for 'individualised service delivery' that was not restricted to CALD clients. This reflects the notion that inclusiveness and equal outcomes for CALD clients—as well as people with disability, for example—will occur naturally if there is a commitment to client-centred service models. One male survey respondent criticised what he viewed as the current 'one-size-fits-all' notion of service provision and suggested that tailored and considered approaches should replace automated systems and dogmatic attitudes. Several survey respondents suggested that automated systems, especially telephone automated systems, were both very slow and unable to recognise the full range of accents that Australians have, causing excessive wait times and frustration. One survey respondent recommended a return to a more individualised approach to service delivery that would more effectively met the needs of service users in a way that automated systems could not.

Other feedback referred specifically to the need for service delivery to be genuinely *culturally inclusive*. Several proponents of this view did not advocate for targeted approaches, but considered that this could be provided on a broad level by ensuring that staff providing mainstream services were always respectful, sensitive and culturally competent in their interactions with customers. Some feedback indicated that service delivery was not always undertaken in an inclusive way; that current attitudes towards CALD representation and services overall appeared "*tokenistic rather than a truly inclusive strategy*" (survey response). Another survey respondent suggested that many Government employees do not see CALD accessibility as part of standard service provision, but as an "add on".

The third approach to incorporating an awareness of cultural diversity into policy and service delivery proposed by consultation participants was the suggestion that more CALD-specific services should be made available. FECCA received feedback that, in some circumstances, additional and specific support mechanisms were required by

CALD clients. For example, a service provider representative described the need for CALD Australians to be a target group:

One service provider representative in Perth stressed the importance of specialist multicultural organisations for providing services to CALD clients. He suggested that Government agencies could facilitate this by allocating a certain proportion of the service-delivery contracts to organisations capable of providing specialist services. He cited, as a positive example, the funding arrangements of the WA Department for Child Protection's⁶ private tenancy support services contracts. One of the contracts was specifically designed to be available only to an organisation that can deliver culturally and linguistically diverse-specific services. This ensured that there would be at least one (without limiting others) tender awarded to an organisation that would deliver targeted service to CALD clients.

An alternative option suggested for achieving the same goal was that Government agencies should encourage multicultural organisations to apply for contracts themselves, or encourage mainstream organisations to enter into partnerships with multicultural specialist providers. The service provider participant gave the positive example of a joint arrangement between Relationships Australia and the Multicultural Services Centre WA in operating the Perth Family Relationship Centre. The Centre, which is funded by the WA Attorney General's Department, offers services that are responsive to CALD clients' specific needs.

All three 'levels' on which incorporating an awareness of cultural diversity into policy and service delivery that have been discussed above—client-centred service, cultural competency and CALD specific service delivery—require Government commitment and resourcing. One female survey respondent criticised the budget pressures imposed by Government hierarchies as limiting the ability of individual staff to provide adequate services for CALD clients, such as by spending extra time explaining a service or seeking an interpreter. Such an atmosphere, she argued, was not conducive to fostering a culture of empathy and equity.

"If the Government is serious about equity, the CALD population needs to be a specific target group like it was before the Howard Government." (Perth)

⁶ The WA Department for Child Protection also has a *Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Services Framework 2010–2012*, <http://www.dcp.wa.gov.au/Organisation/Documents/CaLD%20Services%20Framework.pdf> (accessed 16 May 2013).

4.1 Client-centred service delivery

As noted previously in this chapter, the client-centred service delivery model has been advocated by CALD consumers as an effective means through which to ensure effective service delivery.

There are two key premises underpinning this model of service delivery. The first assumes the need for service provision to be driven by the consumer and their expressed needs, rather than what the service provider may wish to prioritise and subsequently deliver. The second premise is that individual user or consumer needs cannot be responded to unless they are fully listened to and comprehended, and for this to occur, clients must feel comfortable to provide feedback and have confidence that this will be heard and acted on.⁷ The latter point emphasises the need for service delivery to be coupled with a strong individual/consumer focus that encourages and makes opportunities for client feedback.

In implementing an effective client-centred service delivery model, it is imperative that expectations and responsibilities to effectively enable this are recognised by both the agency or organisation delivering the service, as well as the consumer or client who will be accessing them. The interdependent relationship between the client and consumer is paramount in this context—just as service providers must ensure that they effectively listen and respond to feedback from their clients, the latter must be aware of, and have the necessary support to provide feedback on an ongoing basis to an organisation, to allow for the continual improvement of service delivery.

4.2 Respect, sensitivity and cultural competency of all staff

As can be seen in Figure 4.1, ‘staff who are friendly and respectful’ was overwhelmingly the most commonly identified factor considered helpful in seeking to access Government services by survey respondents. ‘Staff who are friendly and helpful’ was selected almost twice as often as the next most common choice of ‘staff who speak my language’. As one survey respondent explained:

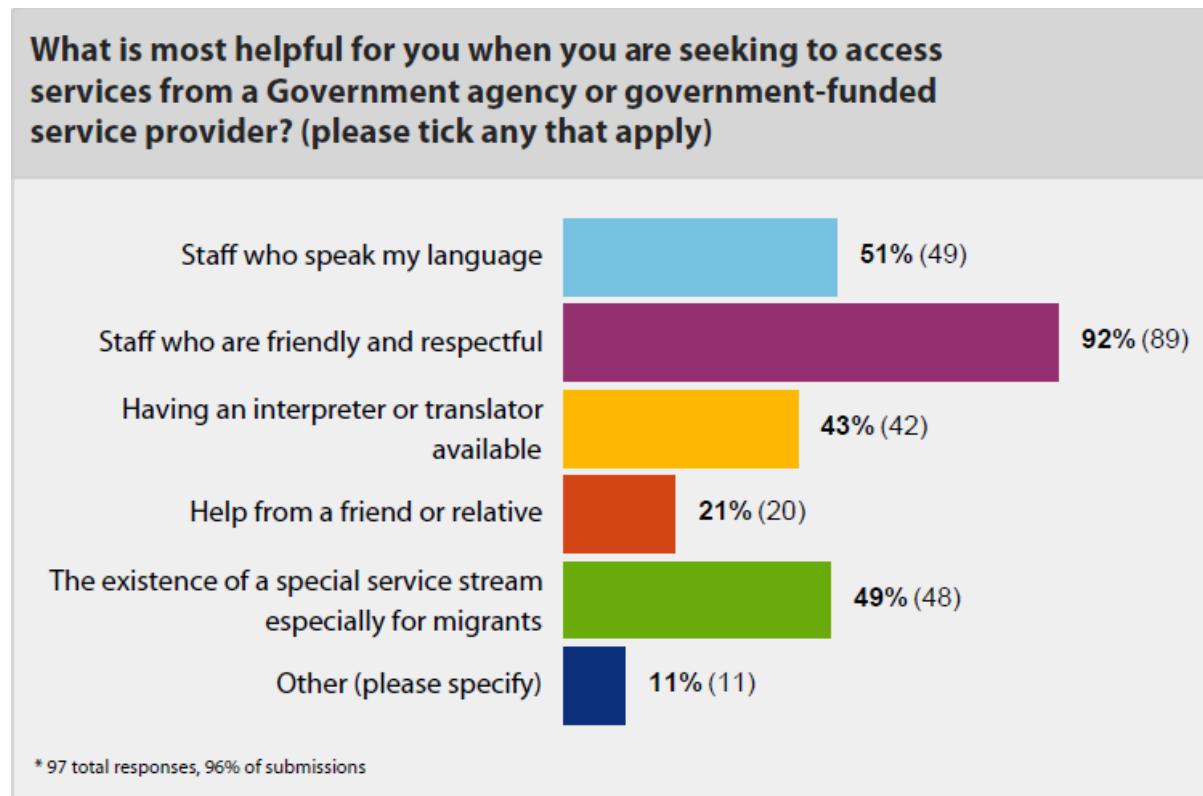
“Welcoming by staff from similar backgrounds when we visit any Government services means a lot to us. It not only helps us easy to communicate our needs but also by that positive experience, we also can build more trust to come back again later when we need other help.” (survey response)

⁷ Yeatman, Anna and Kathryn Owler. 2001. ‘The Role of Contract in the Democratisation of Service Delivery’. *Law in Context* 18(2), page 34.

As another participant suggested, being culturally competent does not necessarily need to be about speaking another language; it can be much simpler:

"People have done cultural services training – but it's not another language – it's being polite and respectful." (Cooma)

Figure 4.1



FECCA received feedback from many survey and consultation participants specifically echoing this sentiment. Participants explained that displays of empathy, compassion or understanding from staff were extremely valuable in supporting CALD clients seeking to access Government services, especially in the face of the range of practical and procedural difficulties and frustrations described in this report. For example, one survey participant described his spoken English as reasonably sufficient, but his written English comprehension as not as good. This participant explained that interacting with staff who were cognisant of this, who expressed empathy and who showed the extra patience, was enough to make his experience accessing Government services positive. Conversely, when such respect was absent, a few CALD clients expressed that they felt strongly discouraged from attempting to seek access the same service again. This clearly indicates that Government service staff need to display appropriate cultural competency and sensitivity towards the needs of their CALD clients in order to facilitate equitable service delivery.

Respondents expressed varying degrees of satisfaction with the levels of cultural competency and sensitivity currently displayed by service providers and Government staff. A number of participants praised the efforts of some service providers in seeking to train their staff and raise awareness, and felt that many staff were friendly and respectful. Nonetheless, the quality of staff was still likened by a couple of survey respondents to somewhat of a ‘hit and miss game’, with other staff displaying less than satisfactory attitudes.

A number of respondents claimed that Government staff often demonstrated a lack of sensitivity to the needs of CALD clients, for instance, via the ‘patriarchal attitude’ that organisations ‘don’t need to be CALD specific because we treat everyone the same’ (Cooma). However, as many have argued, it is inappropriate and erroneous to treat everyone as though they are from an Anglo-Saxon background. One male survey respondent explained that in his experience, many family and child support services displayed a normative assumption of an Anglo-Saxon culture, rather than approaching service provision in a more culturally sensitive manner.

Throughout the consultations, participants discussed the issue of how one is treated and cultural competence more generally by focusing on particular sectors and groups. For example, in relation to the education sector, participants provided examples of sensitive issues that needed to be considered, including sensitivity towards vegetarian needs and inaccurate assumptions about English skills based on CALD-sounding names. With regard to childcare, one survey respondent lamented the lack of culturally sensitive workers or environments available to support CALD children.

Another sector in which particular negative feedback was received was healthcare and medical treatment. Instances of failure in treating patients from different backgrounds—particularly older patients—with sensitivity and cultural competency had very negative effects on some respondents. This was expressed particularly strongly with regard to Muslim women (Chapter 2 contains further discussion of cultural sensitivities related to Muslim women accessing services; see the *‘Specific example group: Muslim Women’* box on page 51).

Conversely, FECCA received some positive feedback about aged care service delivery. Participants gave examples of cultural competency in aged care provision, while also noting particular sensitivities that were not always addressed by service providers.

SPECIFIC EXAMPLE AREA: WHAT'S HAPPENING IN AGED CARE?

Aged care [services] have done a lot to try to train their staff and make them aware of the needs of older clients from CALD backgrounds. (Cooma)

The Australian Government is beginning to recognise that a large proportion of the older Australians increasingly accessing aged care services are from CALD backgrounds, and that there is a need to address barriers to adequate and accessible culturally and linguistically appropriate aged care services. In December 2012, the Government, with assistance from FECCA, released an *Ageing and Aged Care Strategy for People from CALD Backgrounds*. A participant at FECCA's Perth consultation commended the Strategy as a positive initiative.

Some of the particular needs of older CALD Australians were raised in FECCA's Access and Equity consultations. One participant at the Perth consultation mentioned evidence suggesting that self-harm and suicide rates are higher amongst CALD aged care patients. FECCA's own research confirms such evidence. This worrying trend adds impetus to the need for specific funding to be made available to ensure targeted and culturally appropriate care for older CALD Australians is delivered.

Participants explained that as CALD people age, people may experience the return of old and traumatic memories and the loss of English language ability in favour of their first language. This can alter their needs, but participants suggested that service staff are not always cognisant of these new needs.

And if people are not aware—often things come back to people when they're old—things come back—like from the war period—and the staff need to know that. (Cooma)

With the snowy scheme, a lot of people came to Cooma, and a lot of them who came to consider themselves Australian—but when they get older they revert back to their first language. (Cooma)

In some cases, these issues caused older CALD Australians to cease engagement with aged care workers completely:

With my aunt who went through all sorts of dramas. She had gone through the war...but when she got to an age where she needed help – she would not let anyone except family into the house. So she lay on the floor for four days... For her, the experience she had during the war, of being too frightened... (Cooma)

In situations where older people experience less severe reactions, participants indicated that staff who are able to empathise with their experiences is highly valuable:

To have people who understand—who understand what it's like to have gone through the war years, and then come to Australia—who can empathise about their experiences—is very valuable. (Cooma)

Participants at the Perth consultation explained that some ageing people from CALD backgrounds do not wish to enter aged care facilities. He continued that home-based aged care services provided at the home need to be culturally specific and competent. Examples of cultural sensitivities required included whether or not it was customary to enter houses with shoes and what times meals should be delivered. Participants explained that when people do move into aged care facilities, staff need to be aware of cultural sensitivities including the need for food to be prepared appropriate to each person's cultural and/or religious needs.

Further, it was raised that a proportion of aged care service provision contracts should be awarded to multicultural service providers in order to ensure that CALD people can access specialist, culturally appropriate care (*see discussion above on page 88*).

Another participant at the Perth consultation discussed the importance of cultural competency among aged care workers. She said that the Aged Care Certificate course currently includes an option unit on working with CALD clients. She suggested the unit should be made compulsory, and further, that it feature prominently in training programs to facilitate a culturally competent aged care workforce (*see broader recommendation on this below*). In addition, she suggested that Certificate 3 in aged care should be made more easily accessible for people from CALD backgrounds.

Issues with cultural sensitivity and competency appear to be even more pronounced in rural and regional areas. A number of consultation participants suggested that this was due to non-metropolitan areas having comparatively less diversity and multiculturalism than in larger cities.

A significant number of participants expressed frustration at behaviours that they saw not only as insensitive but which could be classified as outright discriminatory. Several recounted staff members who made them feel as though they 'were not really Aussie' and who 'stop connecting with you':

In addition, discrimination by the police force was also raised as a particularly sensitive issue by a few participants, given its potential wider negative repercussions in society.

"Many will interact with you from the perspective that they are the owners of the country [Australia] and you are just a someone who happen to have come here." (survey response)

Having said that, a representative of the WA Police described the importance of building good relationships between the CALD community and the police force as well as building the cultural competency of the police force. In this regard, she described the WA Police's Indigenous and Community Diversity Unit, which works to build positive relationships with the different CALD community groups in the Perth metropolitan area,

with certain staff working with particular community groups. Service provider representatives at the Perth consultation confirmed the Unit actively engaged multicultural organisations as well as with local schools. Moreover, internally, the WA Police has formulated a policy allowing its female employees to wear culturally important attire such as a headscarves, to prevent impeding the recruit of potential personnel from any CALD groups.

Due to the experiences of insensitive, disrespectful, or sometimes even discriminatory, treatment by staff described throughout this section, many participants suggested that comprehensive cross-cultural competency should be made compulsory for Government officers and mainstream service providers.

In addition, a group at the Auburn consultation spoke about the need for staff members—they spoke in particular about job agents and Centrelink workers—to be overseen by a supervisor or similar role to ensure they are treating CALD clients (and all clients) with respect and cultural sensitivity. This goes to matters of accountability, and will be discussed further in Chapter 5.

FECCA RECOMMENDATION 16

FECCA recommends that, in instances where Government bodies or Government-funded organisations require certain education qualifications of their employees, that a cross-cultural communication component of such study should also be required. This should include teaching qualifications (primary, secondary, TAFE, university), TAFE certifications (child care certificate, aged care certificate) and other professional qualifications (community health, social work qualifications and so on).

FECCA RECOMMENDATION 17

FECCA recommends that the Australian Government require its agencies to demonstrate via regular reporting mechanisms that their commitment to culturally competent service provision is supported at all levels of the agency and by any contracted service provider. One reportable element should be a demonstration that there is a sufficient funding allocation to train staff to provide culturally competent service in all direct service delivery situations.

4.3 CALD-specific support and assistance

"Some organisations say, we don't need to be CALD specific because we treat everyone the same. But this annoys me. We are different! What if it were you, what if you went to Thailand or the Philippines, how would you like to be treated, to help you out?" (Cooma)

While participants at FECCA's consultations emphasised the importance of respect and cultural sensitivity, FECCA also received substantial feedback about the importance of services provision that is CALD-specific and responds to CALD-specific needs.

Participants explained that without such support, CALD clients face greater challenges in accessing services and achieving equal outcomes from those services. Part of the CALD-specific support that is needed responds to language needs. This is discussed in the sub-section on TIS and staff who speak your language below on page 99.

Other CALD-specific support that is needed concerns the need to respond to the cultural, religious or other needs of CALD clients. This requires service providers to train their existing staff or employ CALD workers. A female participant in Ballarat commented that it can be hard for organisations without CALD employees to get to the 'root' of problems because staff are unable to fully appreciate CALD clients' needs.

Many participants suggested that the best way to support CALD clients is for Government departments to employ CALD staff. Participants considered that service providers needed to take this practical step in order to demonstrate that their approach to CALD people was inclusive rather than tokenistic.

A service provider representative at the Ballarat consultation commented that some service providers and agencies had justified their lack of bilingual and CALD staff as a response to low demand. However, she suggested that in reality demand was high, and access to services amongst the Ballarat CALD community was disproportionately low as compared to other areas in Australia. Similarly, another participant at the Ballarat consultation said that low rates of service access by CALD Australians indicated a need that is 'still greater than [Government service agencies] acknowledge.' FECCA acknowledges that it may be difficult for agencies and their funded service providers to identify and provide an adequate level of CALD-specific support. However, FECCA urges agencies to engage in review processes involving consultation with CALD communities, to ensure that unmet need is addressed. Further, FECCA suggests that it cannot be presumed that because there may be low use of services, there is low demand for services. In many cases, FECCA's consultations revealed that low use of services is due to a range of other factors—such as insufficiency of services or lack of awareness of services.

Some service types were identified by participants as having potential to be particularly improved if CALD-specific programs were implemented. For example, a participant at the Perth consultation suggested that the childcare sector would benefit if childcare workers' backgrounds better reflected the backgrounds of the children they cared for. She suggested that further training or recruitment of CALD people would assist in this regard. Another Perth participant gave an example of what he viewed as an effective model for responding to the needs of CALD children—the 'Ethnic Child Care Resource Unit' in WA. This Unit was federally funded by the then Department of Families and Community Services (now FaHCSIA) and assisted childcare centres in the Perth region to provide carers in the languages spoken by CALD children. He described it as a positive and effective program, but unfortunately, one that was discontinued after federal funding cuts around five years ago.

A Perth-based telephone participant suggested that another sector that would greatly benefit from CALD-specific services was domestic and family violence services. She stated that, to her knowledge, no WA domestic or family violence services were CALD-specific, and the multicultural service sector was underfunded in general. She explained that this lack of CALD-specific shelters propagated a dangerous cycle because CALD women are often unwilling to turn to non-CALD-specific shelters, and therefore returned to abusive husbands and partners.

As stated in various sections of this report, feedback from consultation participants suggested that the lack of CALD-specific services is exacerbated in regional areas:

"We hardly have any CALD specific workers in any of that—in aged care, disability, nursing— they come into the community and they're actually trained, they just have to learn English—they [should be] able to become specialised workers." (Cooma)

However, one example of a CALD-specific service in a regional area about which FECCA received positive feedback was Ballarat's Refugee Health Nurse (see *Good Practice 4*, p. 97).

Another CALD-specific initiative to support equitable outcomes raised in FECCA's consultations was DHS's Multicultural Services Officers (MSOs). DHS has a number of good initiatives in place to cater to the needs of its CALD clients, recognising that a significant portion of its client base is from a CALD background. This makes sense given the huge number of clients DHS services and the variety of services and payments it provides. A service provider representative from Perth commended the work of the Centrelink MSOs. However, she suggested that their key role was to connect service providers with clients, and as a result, were not sufficiently available to clients themselves. A Ballarat-based consultation participant praised the dedicated Multicultural Services Officer who worked in the Ballarat area prior to 2009. The former officer, he

said, provided highly-valued support for new arrivals settling in the town, built up a rapport with the refugee community, developed knowledge of the types of issues they were facing and gave first-hand support and direction. However, from 2009, DHS changed the geographical boundaries of its service centres, and Ballarat was merged with the Werribee area. The consultation participant lamented that the new officer, despite being a helpful and effective support worker, is responsible for servicing a large area including all of the western suburbs of Melbourne, so there is limited access to her assistance in Ballarat.

Good Practice 4: Community Health Nurse (Refugees and Cultural Diversity)

Who? Community Health Nurse (Refugees and Cultural Diversity)

Where? Ballarat, VIC

Funded by? Victorian Department of Health

What? The Ballarat Community Health Nurse (Refugees and Cultural Diversity) (CHN) is provided through Ballarat Community Health as part of the Refugee Health Nurse Program (RHNP).

The RHNP provides a co-ordinated approach to refugee health through providing community health nurses with expertise in working with CALD and marginalised communities. The RHNP aims to increase refugee access to primary health services, improve the response of health services to refugee needs, and enable individuals, families and newly arrived communities to improve their health and wellbeing.

How does it reach the CALD community? Refugees are referred to Ballarat's CHN (and other RHNP nurses in other regions) via Humanitarian Settlement Services. In Ballarat, while other CALD clients who are not refugees are not referred to the CHN, the CHN assists the wider CALD community by educating service providers on cultural competency, use of interpreters and understanding the difference between asylum seekers, refugees and access to services.

How does it help the CALD community? This service helps new refugees greatly as Ballarat's CHN is skilled in identifying health issues specific to refugees at a time most needed—upon arrival. For refugees, a particular need is immunisation and connecting the client with a GP and dental services. For victims of torture and trauma, counselling is provided by Foundation House, a Victorian non-governmental organisation that provides services for refugees who have survived torture, trauma and/or war. Ballarat's CHN also works with the refugee clients on other determinants of health—helping clients access schools, housing, paid employment, Centrelink, etc. In addition, the CHN coordinates with various stakeholders and engages in education of service providers in order to better cater for refugee and CALD health needs.

More information about the way in which DHS's MSO program increases accessibility to Australian Government services for CALD Australians is detailed in the *Good Practice 5* below.

Good Practice 5: DHS Multicultural Service Officers

Who? DHS Multicultural Services Officers

Where? Australia-wide

Funded by? DHS

What? DHS MSOs are specialised officers to assist CALD immigrants and refugees to access services.

The MSO role, according to DHS, includes:

- promoting services to refugee and immigrant communities;
- providing information to customers and community organisations;
- participating in local community and interagency forums and networks;
- facilitating local multicultural advisory groups;
- providing DHS and other Government departments with community feedback;
- providing multicultural service delivery and cross-cultural training to DHS staff;
- providing support and assistance to DHS staff in complex cases;
- organising information seminars in partnership with community agencies;
- working with community agencies to develop programs to improve social and economic participation of multicultural customers; and
- identifying service gaps and barriers, to help improve customer satisfaction.

How do they reach the CALD community? A key part of their role is to promote programs, payments and services to refugee and immigrant communities. One way they do this is by participating in local community group forums, and also by holding group information sessions with multicultural customers.

How do they help the CALD community? MSOs help CALD immigrant and refugee communities access Australian Government services by breaking down cultural barriers and building relationships, and by identifying issues being experienced by the CALD clients in their area and feeding this back to Centrelink so that improvements can be made.

MSOs also play a key role in improving the way Centrelink works with CALD clients by providing cross-cultural training to Centrelink staff, which in turn makes Centrelink staff more culturally competent when working with CALD clients and more responsive to their needs.

TIS and staff who speak your language

Language was a recurring theme throughout this year's consultations. Chapter 1 explained that in some cases, language barriers prevent CALD people from being aware of Government services at all. In addition, Chapter 3 mentioned the language barriers faced by recently-arrived immigrants with regard to actually accessing services. FECCA is aware that the Australian Government has three key systems in place to support people with low English skills to access services:

- provision of written information about Government services in languages other than English;
- provision of interpreters at Government shopfronts and call centres; and
- the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS).

FECCA consultations revealed that CALD people have experienced challenges in relation to each of the above systems.

"With the exception of one interpreter at Centrelink [suburb], [accessing Government information and services] is a nightmare and totally incomprehensible for somebody of my background." (survey response)

One view expressed was that the one line of advice about the TIS which appears in many standard Government English-language brochures is insufficient in engaging immigrants. As a Cooma service provider explained, it would be better to provide more comprehensive in-language information:

"With all services in general we are mandated to provide non-discriminatory services to everybody – we have a lovely blurb – we provide services to everyone...it's a statement. But if you've got a person who is new to our country – what does that tell them?"

If you have a second brochure, saying, "are you a NESB [person of a non-English speaking background] looking for work?," and then you have information in your own language – people could pick that up and get meaningful information. If you pick up one of our English brochures, it's one line – it says, we provide a service for CALD community members, but it doesn't go on to say we have interpreter services, - the tools of information – it doesn't give enough information.

If you have a separate brochure, you'll attract their attention, and they'll want to know how you can help them." (Cooma)

FECCA heard from some participants who had not realised that translating and interpreting services were available:

"I didn't used to know that translation services were available, so I used to have to translate at the doctor's for my mother-in-law. I used to avoid asking her about particular health issues because I was too uncomfortable talking about them! Translators are very effective and useful, as it helps my mother-in-law to have confidence that the translator is accurately explaining her problems." (Cooma)

FECCA also received feedback that some service providers did not allow access to translators. In one example, an elderly female participant described her personal experience of having a knee problem and being transferred to *Disability Employment Services* to help her find a job:

In some cases, participants noted that service providers were reluctant to use interpreter services extended to public service providers. A private Ballarat service provider stated that most of her clients were convinced that public housing commission staff were unwilling to organise interpreters or take the necessary time to explain requirements to them using simpler English terms.

A number of participants discussed problems with interpreters in various health-related settings. Survey respondents cited GP as well as specialist medical appointments. A number of participants—both speakers of NEC languages such as Karen and more established languages such as Mandarin—recounted experiences of being denied an interpreter altogether. One participant (via telephone) cited a hospital and an ambulance service in her area that did not provide translation services. A participant in Auburn echoed a similar experience:

"He wanted an interpreter, but they [hospital staff] ignored that too." (Auburn)

"I didn't know that you could get translation services for doctors' appointments. I was aware of translation services for immigration, but not for health!" (Cooma)

Other participants noted difficulties finding translated information:

"It is difficult to find information about health services and medical issues in Indonesian. It's surprising given the number of Indonesians in Australia!" (Cooma)

"She felt discriminated against by the first agent she spoke to there and requested a transfer. She felt she needed an interpreter but they would not get her one. This meant she could not get feedback about why she could not get a particular job." (Auburn)

In other cases, interpreters were not available despite being booked well in advance. One participant (via telephone) said that while it was sometimes possible to book an interpreter, the interpreter did not always turn up. Another person recounted an experience of booking an interpreter for her mother (who speaks no English) in advance of an appointment at the hospital:

Another elderly female participant recounted her interpreter only staying for five minutes:

"They just say 'Sorry, nobody available today' but we did the booking two months ago!" (Auburn)

"She booked an interpreter a long time ago. While she was sitting at the doctor, the interpreter probably just stayed there five minutes and walked away later even before she finished her appointment."

(Auburn)

Another participant (via telephone) suggested that in-person interpreters were being used so ineffectively that telephone interpreters should be made the norm. However, FECCA also received feedback about insufficient telephone interpreter services. One person explained that she had called 131450 (TIS National), and was informed that TIS 'could not ring the hospital to make an appointment' and also, 'did not have the people speaking the relevant language available today'.

FECCA also received advice that specialists did not know about or chose not to use translation services. One participant (via telephone) explained that many specialists seemed to be unaware of Government-funded translation services. She suggested there was a need for greater education and dissemination of information about translation and interpreting services to all medical staff. Regarding specialists' hesitancy to use interpreters, one service provider explained:

"The first thing we have really really got a problem, when you make an appointment with specialist, the specialist doesn't want to use interpreter because it's time consuming [for them]. Specialists want to [have appointments] without interpreters. How can you express yourself to a specialist? You need interpreter with a specialist! When we make appointments they don't like to make appointments with interpreters. How are they going to solve their [medical] problems?" (Auburn)

She continued that the problem with medical specialists' reluctance to use interpreters was exacerbated by a lack of translated information available in relation to healthcare:

"Also, I would like to raise for the Government, most of the refugees have a problem with communication with the doctors. Which the doctors and with the nurse, and even with [health] administration. And there is not much written information, Dari information, you don't get that much from hospital, from other services. You need such information [in Dari]. And there is a lack of information before they arrive in Australia. You need to get more information about Australia. About the system, about the law, everything. It's very difficult - - you don't know the medical word. You need someone to be an interpreter for you. Some clients they go and buy different medicine [rather than the medicine they need]." (Auburn)

When FECCA staff followed up the issue with participants, they agreed that interpreter services needed improvement.

A service provider in Ballarat confirmed that the comment above also applied to his area. He explained that the reluctance of doctors (both at private practices and at public hospitals) and police to use interpreters stemmed from the need for

comprehensive briefs and additional paperwork to be prepared when interpreters were involved. He continued that another issue was the high frequency of technical terms and vocabulary necessary for interpreters to familiarise themselves with in justice and medical situations, which had the potential to further delay proceedings. The service provider warned that the underutilisation of TIS services could cause policy makers to cut funding for TIS, while the only way to increase the number of specialist interpreters available would be to increase funding for TIS.

Auburn Dari-speaking participants also raised the problem of interpreters being used to assist clients who did not speak the target language:

"Yes, but they often don't translate correctly. For us, we speak Dari, and the interpreter comes and s/he is an Iranian interpreter, and doesn't understand 20 per cent of what we say. They say other things. This is a problem..."

"Most of the people who do interpretation job for Afghans are from Iran. Now the Iranian language and Afghani language is different. A lot of the time Afghan people don't understand Iranian words, and Iranians they don't understand some Afghani words. So that's why they cannot pass the right information either to the Government departments or to the client." (Auburn)

"There is always advertising everywhere, they say if you need interpreter ring this number. There is an interpreting service. But what I said before, some of the doctors don't accept interpreting services because it's time consuming. That's what they say."
(Auburn)

Participants also expressed problems with the quality of interpreter services, even when the interpreter was a native speaker of their own language:

FECCA is concerned that interpreters are being used who do not speak the target language of the client, and that there are concerns about the quality of interpreting services. Participants at the Auburn consultation suggested that there should be 'a test for interpreters'. When the

FECCA staff member explained the current National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters Ltd (NAATTI) process, some participants did not believe that such a system was in place. This demonstrates that the NAATTI system is not working adequately. FECCA is aware that in some cases NAATTI has lowered the fluency standard required by interpreters of languages spoken by high-need groups by allowing those who are 'NAATTI Accredited' rather than 'NAATTI Professional' standard to work in the community. While welcoming this flexibility, it appears from consultation that the 'NAATTI Accredited' standard needs to be higher.

"And the other thing, most of these Afghani [Dari] interpreters, they don't speak proper English. They don't understand English. I know a lot of them. That's why, when they go, they cannot interpret correctly what the client says -- they cannot interpret correctly what the Government says to the client. That's why it creates another problem..." (Auburn)

FECCA RECOMMENDATION 18

FECCA recommends that the Australian Government review the effectiveness of engaging NAATTI 'Accredited' standard interpreters to assist at Government shopfronts and in other Government service-provision settings.



5. Accountability of Services

In Chapters 1–3, this Report discussed the challenges facing CALD people seeking to access Government services. In Chapter 4, FECCA examined some of the mechanisms through which Government agencies address such challenges. FECCA has provided some examples of good practice, where systems designed to help CALD Australians have worked. This chapter addresses the avenues for complaint to help people when the systems do not work so well.

FECCA first describes participants' feedback about their experience of needing to or actually making a complaint about a Government service. This chapter then provides some examples of instances in which a large number of people experienced poor service from a particular provider, or type of provider. These situations caused participants to raise questions about the effectiveness of service providers' accountability to Government funding bodies.

5.1 Making an individual complaint

Like all other Australians, CALD Australians have the right to make a complaint about services they have received from a Government or Government-funded organisation. Some people who have recently arrived in Australia may be unaware of this right, and

so in order for them to have equal opportunity to make a complaint, service providers need to make this known in an understandable way. Especially in the case of people who have recently arrived in Australia from countries where corruption exists or where it is uncommon to make complaints about Government services, service providers need to ensure that clients understand their rights in Australia.

Second, for CALD people who have limited English, especially written English, the process of making a complaint can be more difficult than for someone who has lived in Australia a long time. Service providers need to have strategies to help people make complaints.

Third, CALD people have the same right as other Australians for their complaints to be addressed and for a resolution to be achieved and communicated to them. If people are dissatisfied with the resolution offered, they need to know about and be able to access further assistance, such as from an Ombudsman.

Unfortunately, as discussed in the previous chapters, Government service provision overall remains less accessible to CALD Australians. Therefore, while CALD people may experience difficulties making a complaint, their complaints are often justified.

Accessibility

Given the particular difficulties described above, information about complaints mechanisms needs to be presented in a variety of formats, including in languages other than English. There needs to be a clear and accessible process clients can use to make a complaint, including accessing support such as interpreter services.

However, consultation participants' feedback suggested that these enablers were not always in place. Rather, participants made a number of comments about not being able to make a complaint when something had gone wrong with a service or when they felt they had been treated improperly.

One participant explained that she had experienced a problem at a hospital, had tried to access the complaints system but was advised that no interpreter would be available to assist her:

Other consultation participants described situations where a

"She wanted to complain, but nobody helped them to follow up what had happened." (Auburn)

number of clients felt that the interpreter available at the local Centrelink office was not providing a professional service. Clients explained that the interpreter added her own opinion when she interpreted for clients and thus unprofessionally influenced staff and pre-empted service outcomes. However, participants explained that, given this person was the sole interpreter available for her language, it was impossible to communicate to agency staff without her. This created the impossible situation whereby clients were

reluctant to complain about the person's unprofessional service because in order to do so they needed her help.

In order to avoid these types of situations, agency staff need to make sure that clients are aware that they have alternative options where a given interpreter is providing unprofessional service, such as making telephone interpreters available. In order to ensure transparency, it would be better to make this information available in languages other than English rather than relying on interpreters themselves to communicate it.

5.2 Agencies holding service providers accountable

Where there were instances of continued and widespread poor service, participants questioned how the Government holds its funded providers accountable for the services:

One survey respondent suggested that:

"Many service providers pride themselves and obtain funding targeting CALD communities, but delivered NOTHING!" (survey response)

She suggested that Government scrutinise its providers more carefully to ensure optimal service delivery. In order to address issues of inadequate or inappropriate service delivery, she suggested that CALD community organisations could be engaged to assist service providers to offer culturally sensitive and appropriate services.

FECCA also heard from service providers who provided examples of positive and negative partnerships between mainstream providers and multicultural organisations. One multicultural organisation representative noted two mainstream health organisations with which his organisation experienced a positive partnership. However, he also recounted a situation whereby the relationship between a mainstream provider and a multicultural organisation disintegrated to the extent that CALD-specific service delivery ceased. However, he noted that the service provider continued to receive Government funding for CALD-specific services. FECCA would suggest that such situations are highly unsatisfactory for both clients and Government, and that improved accountability is necessary.

5.3 Specific example: Job Services Australia providers

FECCA consultations revealed a high level of dissatisfaction with JSA providers and an inability to complain:

"I don't know how do they think that the person who doesn't know how to even write, can go and open a computer and look for jobs!"

But because we don't have anywhere to go and complain this, that's why we kept silent." (Auburn)

In Chapter 3, FECCA recounted the large number of complaints from people with language, literacy and technological difficulties who received no further service from JSAs apart from being offered the use of a computer. This indicates that either clients were placed in the wrong JSA stream or simply that service provision was inadequate.

A large number of consultation participants suggested that there was no complaints mechanism available to them to address problems with JSA providers. However, information on the DEEWR website explains that service providers must have a process in place to deal with any complaint raised by the public, and following, that clients may call the Government customer service line. An example of such information appearing on a Sydney JSA provider's website is as follows (FECCA is unable to check each and every JSA service provider website):

How can I provide feedback about The ORS Group's Employment Services?

If you think you aren't receiving the right help or have a complaint about The ORS Group, you should first try to talk to us by either speaking to your consultant or the manager at your local office, or by calling us on 1300 265 957. We will provide a feedback process that is fair and we will try to resolve your concerns as quickly as possible.

If you feel you can't talk to us about your concerns, or you are still unhappy, you can call the Government's Customer Service Line on 1800 805 260 (free call from land lines).⁸

However, the number of consultation participants who were not aware of these options suggests that online, English language advice is insufficient for people who have only recently arrived in Australia. In order to make sure that every Australian can exercise their right to make a complaint about a JSA provider, there needs to be better distribution of information about the complaints mechanisms in languages other than English, and in hard copy.

Many participants suggested that JSA providers were not sufficiently accountable to DEEWR.

⁸ ORS Group, *Job Services Australia Employment Services*, <http://www.orsgroup.com.au/our-services-2/employment-services/job-services-australia-jsa-2/> (accessed 19 May 2013).

FECCA is aware that the Government has implemented a number of oversight mechanisms to ensure adequate services are delivered by JSA providers. These include quarterly evaluations measured against Key Performance Indicators of efficiency and effectiveness. However, FECCA suggests that the instrument used to determine efficiency and effectiveness is too blunt; arguably favouring providers who place a large number of clients rather than rewarding providers who place clients in long-term positions relevant to their skills and qualifications.

FECCA is also aware that the JSA system was audited in 2011-12 and that an independent *Advisory Panel on Employment Services Administration and Accountability* was established in June 2011. FECCA is also aware that the tender for JSA service provision is in the process of renewal, and has taken the opportunity to contribute to an improved process in the future via the *Building on Success Employment Services Issues Paper*.

FECCA suggests that while JSA services complaints mechanisms appear to exist, and that DEEWR is genuinely committed to quality service, this does not always translate to real outcomes at the practical coalface level for CALD clients. FECCA suggests that the Government, especially during the JSA tender and review process, seek to create stronger links between the very good policy stances and systems described online and the actual service delivery experienced by job seekers. FECCA consultations revealed missing links in three Australian states and suggests therefore that the overall system needs improvement.

FECCA RECOMMENDATION 19

FECCA recommends that the Australian Government strengthen the oversight of employment service providers to ensure clients are assisted appropriate to their needs by:

- **implementing the recommendations of the 2011-2012 audit report;**
- **ensuring that evaluations include an assessment of aligning assistance provided with individual needs of clients; and**
- **ensuring that DEEWR's complaints and feedback system for JSAs is promoted effectively so that it reaches clients, and is in accessible formats including written mechanism such as paper forms, 'in-person' mechanisms such as an officer to provide feedback verbally, and with information on how to get assistance in languages other than English.**

5.4 Specific area: 457 visa holders

FECCA received some feedback, particularly at the Ballarat consultation, about the misuse of 457 visas by employers. Some participants noted that some 457 visa holders were being made to perform tasks outside those which they had been sponsored to do, and needed an avenue of redress. Other comments in other states suggested similar situations. FECCA is aware of the option for visa holders to complain to DIAC or the Fair Work Ombudsman but it appeared that consultation participants were not.

In this sense it is important that DIAC ensure that 457 visa holders are adequately informed of their rights. There are increasing reports of the small and yet significant minority of employers that abuse the rights of 457 visa holders. A detailed discussion of this issue is well outside the scope of this report. However, FECCA notes that it is an issue that was raised during its Access and Equity consultations, and urges the Government to take steps not only to reduce opportunities for abuse but also to ensure that there are appropriate and clear avenues for visa holders to complain if instances of abuse to occur.

5.5 Specific area: Racism and Discrimination

As discussed in Chapter 3, it is illegal for Government service providers to discriminate based on race. There are opportunities to seek redress both at state/territory and the federal level. One service provider noted the very strong anti-discrimination legislation in place in WA but suggested that it was underutilised because people are not aware of how to make complaints.

Conversely, another participant noted that the equal opportunity policy across WA state public services was very strong, and relatively effectively implemented. She continued that, if such policies were not implemented, clients could contact the WA Equal Opportunity Commission, a system that she suggested seemed to work well.

STATE-BASED CASE STUDY OF ACHIEVING EQUALITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN GOVERNMENT SERVICES: WA'S SUBSTANTIVE EQUALITY

Achieving substantive equality:

WA's Policy Framework for Substantive Equality creates a non-legislative duty within the public service to 'eliminate systemic racial discrimination in the provision of public sector services' and 'promote sensitivity to the different needs of client groups'.

Since 2005, the Equal Opportunity Commission (EOC) of WA has been responsible for overseeing the implementation of the Framework.

The policy requires State Government agencies to identify and remedy deficiencies in the delivery of services to Aboriginal people and people from ethnically and linguistically

diverse backgrounds.

The guiding principle behind the Framework is the recognition that formal equality—where everyone is treated equally—does not necessarily result in substantive equality and, in fact, keeps systemic discrimination hidden from view.

Agencies are taken through various stages, from reviewing policies and practices that may actually entrench discrimination, through to implementing and monitoring changes that are intended to ensure actual equality in the delivery of services.

The EOC has previously advocated in a 2012 submission to the discussion paper on the consolidation of the Commonwealth anti-discrimination laws that this policy approach could be adopted at Federal level.⁹

The WA public departments and agencies of significance each have their individual Policy Frameworks available on their individual websites.

Making a complaint:

In cases where someone feels they have been unlawfully discriminated against, they can lodge a complaint with the Equal Opportunity Commissioner. A complaint form is easily accessible from the EOC's website, which comprehensively provides for a complaint to be made, although the form is only in English.¹⁰ There is also an easily accessible form for 'General feedback' from clients. The EOC does provide information in eight community languages about the Commission, discrimination, and how to use the TIS to contact the Commission.

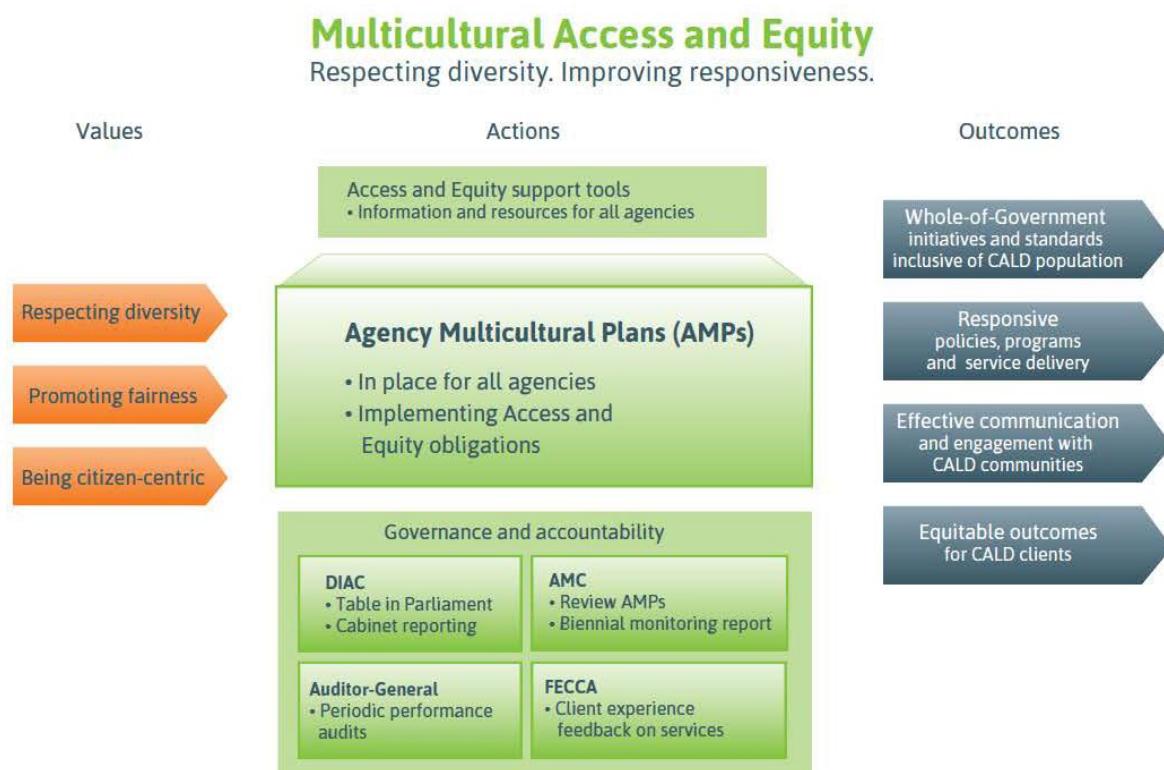
Once a complaint is accepted the Commissioner will usually delegate to a Conciliation Officer to investigate and conciliate the complaint. Onus is placed on the complainant to establish their case with evidence. The Commission will protect the confidentiality of the complaint, and have the power to compel relevant parties to produce evidence or attend conferences. Possible outcomes of complaints are conciliation, dismissal, withdrawal, and potential referral to the State Administrative Tribunal if attempts at conciliation are unsatisfactory.

⁹ Equal Opportunity Commission WA, *Submission to Attorney General's Department Consolidation of Anti-Discrimination Laws - Discussion Paper*, <http://www.ag.gov.au/Consultations/Documents/ConsolidationofCommonwealthanti-discriminationlaws/Consolidation%20-%20Discussion%20Paper%20-%20Submissions%20-%2020160%20-%20Equal%20Opportunity%20Commission%20WA%20-%201%20February%202012.PDF> (accessed 21 May 2013).

¹⁰ Equal Opportunity Commission Western Australia, *Complaint Form*, <http://www.eoc.wa.gov.au/ContactUs/complaintform.aspx> (accessed 21 May 2013).

Appendices

Appendix A: New Multicultural Access and Equity Framework



Source: Access and Equity Inquiry Panel, 2012, *Access & Equity for a multicultural Australia: Inquiry into the responsiveness of Australian Government services to Australia's culturally & linguistically diverse population*, Australian Government Department of Immigration and Citizenship.

Appendix B: Farsi flyer for Auburn consultation



همه استرالیایی‌ها باید بتوانند از پروگرامهای دولتی استفاده کنند؛ از هر کلتور، دین و زبانی که باشند.

سخننه 4 دسمبر 2012
ساعت 12-9
Auburn
NSW Auburn Diversity Services Inc.
17 Macquarie Road Auburn NSW
2144
(همراه با پذیرایی مختصر)
اطلاعات بیشتر :
katrina@fecca.org.au
با:
(02) 6282 5755

فراسیون شوراهای گروههای قومی استرالیا، همراه با سرویس تنوع اوبورن (Auburn)، می‌خواهند از تجربه‌های شما در مورد پروگرامهای دولتی، مثل سنترلینک (Centrelink)، جاب سرویس استرالیا (Job Services Australia)، مدیکر (Medicare) و غیره آگاه شوند.

موضوعات اصلی بحث عبارتند از:

- کاریابی
- صحت
- آموزش و پرورش
- پروگرامهای فامیل و اطفال
- و مشکلات دیگر

Appendix C: Mandarin flyer for Auburn consultation



Be heard.

不论任何文化语言信仰背景所有居住在澳大利亚的人都可以平等的拥有政府福利政策。



澳大利亚民族社会委员会联邦暨Auburn Diversity Services Inc. 聆听你受到 Centrelink, Job Services Australia, Medicare等其他的部门政府福利政策的经验。

讨论的方针:

- 就业
- 医疗
- 教育培训
- 家庭服务
- 其他重要事项

Appendix D: Sample flyer for FECCA's consultations



Be Heard.

All Australians should be able to access Government programs and services equitably, regardless of cultural, linguistic or religious background.

Auburn, NSW

Auburn Diversity
Services Inc.
17 Macquarie Road
Auburn NSW 2144

Tuesday, 4 Dec. 2012

9am-12pm

(light refreshments will be provided)

RSVP/further information:
katrina@fecca.org.au
or (02) 6282 5755

The Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia, in conjunction with Auburn Diversity Services Inc., want to hear about your experiences in accessing Government services through Centrelink, Jobs Services Australia, Medicare and other agencies. Specific discussion areas will include:

- employment;
- health;
- education and training;
- family and child services; and
- other issues you think are important!

Appendix E: Consultation Attendees and Survey Participants

Individuals who identified with the following groups participated in FECCA's 2012-13 Access and Equity consultations:

- Afghan
- Australian
- Austrian
- Bangladeshi
- British
- Burundi
- Chinese
- Congolese
- Croatian
- Dinka
- Fijian
- Filipino
- French Canadian
- German
- Hazara
- Hungarian
- Indian
- Indigenous Australian
- Iranian
- Italian
- Kenyan
- Moroccan
- Polish
- Sudanese
- Swahili
- Swiss
- Tanzanian
- Thai
- Togolese
- Turkish

A total of 29 cultural and linguistic groups were represented at FECCA's four face-to-face consultations.

Individuals who identified with the following groups participated in FECCA's online Access and Equity Survey:

- Arabic
- Argentinian
- Assyrian
- Bosnian
- British
- Buddhist
- Chinese
- Croatian
- Dutch
- Fiji Indian

- Filipino
- Greek
- Hungarian
- Indian
- Indonesian
- Iraqi
- Italian
- Karen (Burmese)
- Korean
- Latvian
- Macedonian
- Muslim
- Nepali
- Oromo
- Polish
- Punjabi Sikh
- Romanian
- Russian
- Serbian
- Singapore Indian
- Somali
- Spanish
- Sri Lankan
- Swiss
- Tamil
- Thai
- Turkish

A total of 37 cultural, religious and linguistic groups were represented through responses to FECCA's Access and Equity Survey.

Appendix E: Consultation consent form

Access & Equity Consultation Consent Form



Consent form for persons participating in FECCA's Access and Equity Consultations

Participant name: _____

Name of facilitator(s): _____

I am a participant in FECCA's Access and Equity Consultations 2011-2012. The details of this consultation and its purpose have been explained to me.

I give my consent to be audio recorded and I understand that:

- Recordings will be stored securely, transcribed and then deleted from voice recorders by FECCA.
- My name and identity will be protected at all times.
- I can request for audio recording to stop at any point during the consultation without giving a reason.
- My consent or non-consent will not affect my participation in any way.

I give my consent to be photographed and I understand that:

- Photographs may be published in FECCA e-News and in the final Access and Equity Report.
- I can request not to be photographed or that photos which include me are not published.

I understand that after I sign and return this consent form it will be kept by FECCA.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Federation of Ethnic
Communities' Councils
of Australia

FECCA House
Unit 1, 4 Philips Close
Deakin ACT 2600

PO Box 344
Curtin ACT 2605

p 03 6282 5755
f 03 6282 5734
e admin@fecca.org.au
w www.fecca.org.au

Appendix G: Consultation feedback form

6. Was the venue suitable for the consultation?

Yes No

Can you tell us why/why not?

7. Could you understand the information and facilitation easily?

Yes No

Can you tell us why/why not?

8. How can we improve our consultations?

9. Can FECCA contact you for further feedback, if necessary?

Yes No

If 'yes', please provide the following details below:

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Mobile: _____

Email: _____

Thank you for attending FECCA's Access & Equity Consultation
and for taking the time to provide valuable feedback.

Please return this form to the consultation facilitator

Appendix H: Online survey

ACCESS & EQUITY

2012-13 Online Survey



Dear participant

The Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA) is the national peak body representing Australians from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds. We provide advocacy, develop policy and promote issues on behalf of our constituency to Government and the broader community. FECCA supports multiculturalism, community harmony, social justice and the rejection of all forms of discrimination and racism.

Each year, FECCA conducts Access and Equity consultations across Australia, to find out what CALD people's experiences are in accessing Government services. This survey is part of the consultation process and helps FECCA to provide feedback to Government on what is and isn't working.

The survey is specifically designed to obtain the insights and opinions of people from CALD backgrounds. It will take you about 5–10 minutes to complete. You can choose to just check the boxes or to supply additional information.

The information that you provide in this survey will be used in FECCA's Access and Equity report. To protect your privacy, the information you provide will be kept securely and any identifying names or features will be removed.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Your feedback is greatly appreciated.

Please tell us about yourself:

- What is your gender? Male
 Female
 Prefer not to specify

- How old are you? Under 18
 18-25
 25-34
 35-44
 45-54
 55-64
 Older than 64
 Prefer not to specify

Which town or city do you live in? (optional)

Which cultural and/or religious background do you identify with? (please specify)

Apart from English, what languages do you speak with your family (including your grandparents, your immediate family, your cousins and other relatives)?

- Mandarin
- Italian
- Arabic
- Cantonese
- Greek
- Vietnamese
- Hindi
- Other

Did you come to Australia from a refugee background or were you granted a humanitarian visa to enter Australia in the last 20 years?

Did you receive an employer-sponsored or independent skilled migrant visa to Australia in the last 20 years?

Please tell us what you think about Government services:

Are you aware of the following Government provided or funded service areas and organisations? (please tick all the organisations you have heard of)

- Settlement services
- Education and training services (e.g. schools, TAFEs, universities, Adult Migrant English Program), Welfare services (e.g. Centrelink)
- Welfare services (e.g. Centrelink)
- Employment services (e.g. Job Services Australia)
- Health and women's health services (e.g. Medicare, BreastScreen Australia)
- Policing and legal services (e.g. Australian Federal Police, LegalAid)
- Child and family support services (e.g. Child Support Agency, childcare services, domestic/family violence services)
- Housing services (e.g. state/community housing providers, crisis accommodation services)

Do you think it is easy
to access information
about Government
provided or funded
services in Australia?

- Yes
 No

Please explain why or
why not:

Please rate your experience/s accessing health or women's health services (e.g. Medicare, public hospitals; BreastScreen Australia). If you have not accessed any health services, please skip this question.

	Very good	Good	Okay	Bad	Very bad
Please select the appropriate rating:	<input type="radio"/>				

Please give details
(optional):

Please rate your experience/s accessing employment or welfare services (e.g. Centrelink, Job Services Australia)? If you have not accessed any employment or welfare services, please skip this question.

	Very good	Good	Okay	Bad	Very bad
Please select the appropriate rating:	<input type="radio"/>				

Please give details (optional):

Please rate your experience/s accessing child or family support services (e.g. Child Support Agency; child care providers, domestic/family violence services)? If you have not accessed any child or family support services, please skip this question.

	Very good	Good	Okay	Bad	Very bad
Please select the appropriate rating:	<input type="radio"/>				

Please give details (optional):

Please rate your experience/s accessing education and training services (Adult Migrant English Program, TAFE, university, apprenticeship)? If you have not accessed any education or training services, please skip this question.

	Very good	Good	Okay	Bad	Very bad
Please select the appropriate rating:	<input type="radio"/>				

Please give details (optional):

-
- What is most helpful for you when you are seeking to access services from a Government agency or government-funded service provider? (please tick any that apply)**
- Staff who speak my language
 - Staff who are friendly and respectful
 - Having an interpreter or translator available
 - Help from a friend or relative
 - The existence of a special service stream especially for migrants
 - Other (please specify)

Please explain why you found this helpful:

-
- What is most difficult for you when you are seeking to access services from a Government agency or government-funded service provider? (please tick any that apply)**
- Staff do not understand my language
 - Staff do not understand my culture
 - Services are too expensive
 - Services are not flexible enough
 - I feel discriminated against because of my background
 - I don't know anyone in Australia to help me
 - There are too many forms to fill out
 - Other (please specify)

Please explain why you found this difficult:

Do you wish to make any further comments about your experience/s accessing Government services, or tell us about your experience accessing a Government service apart from those mentioned in questions 10–13?

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Your feedback is greatly appreciated.

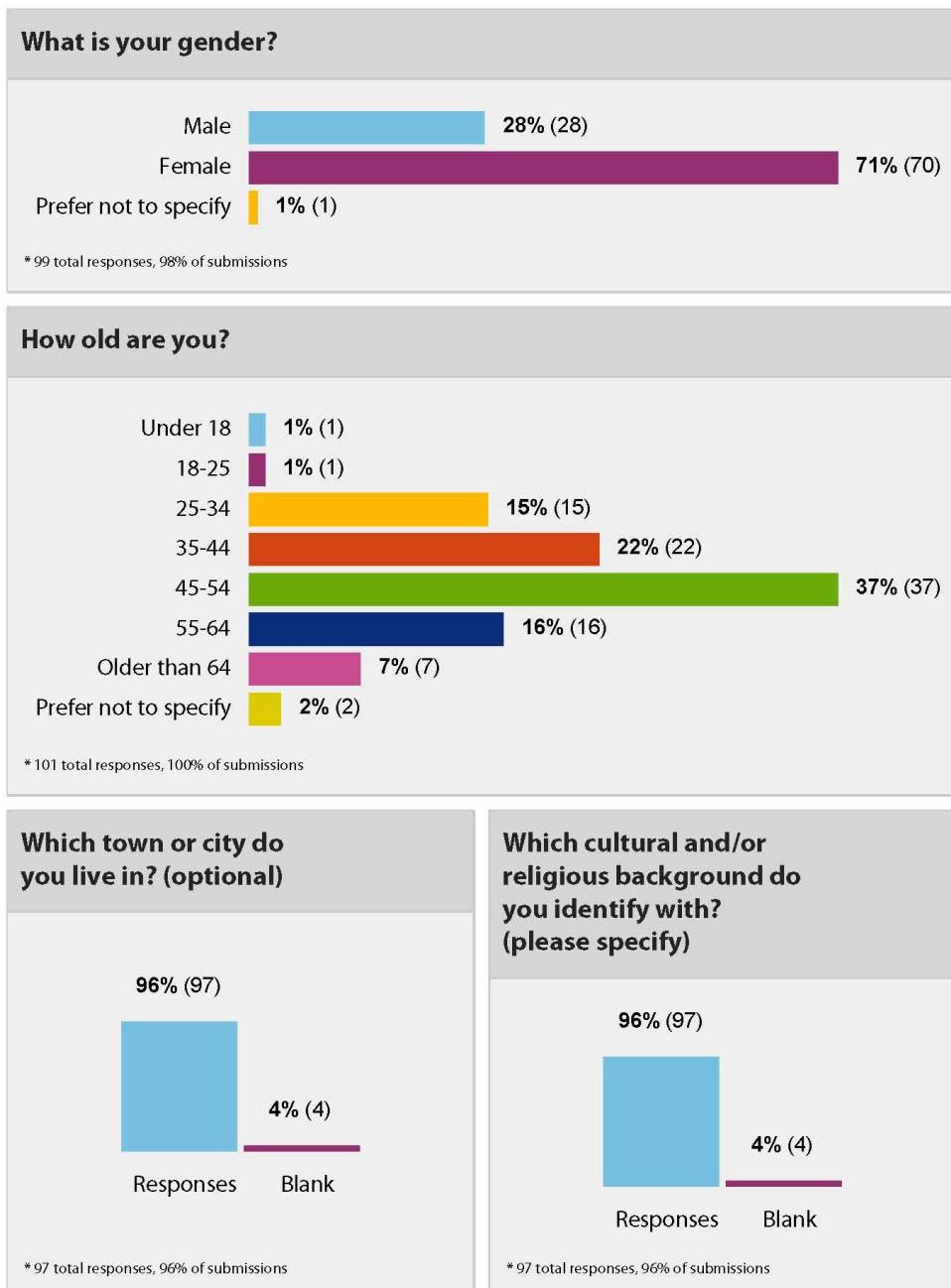
If you would like any more information about this survey or the Access and Equity work undertaken by FECCA, please contact us via the details provided below:

The Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA)
Unit 1, No. 4 Phipps Close
DEAKIN ACT 2617

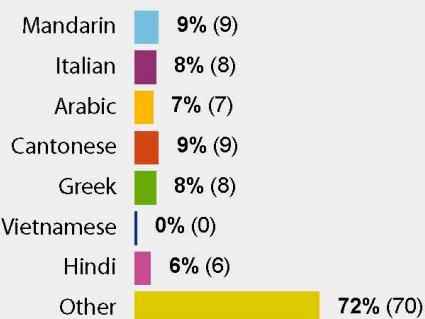
(02) 6282 5755

admin@fecca.org.au

Appendix I: Summary of quantifiable survey results



Apart from English, what languages do you speak with your family (including your grandparents, your immediate family, your cousins and other relatives)?



* 97 total responses, 96% of submissions

Did you come to Australia from a refugee background or were you granted a humanitarian visa to enter Australia in the last 20 years?



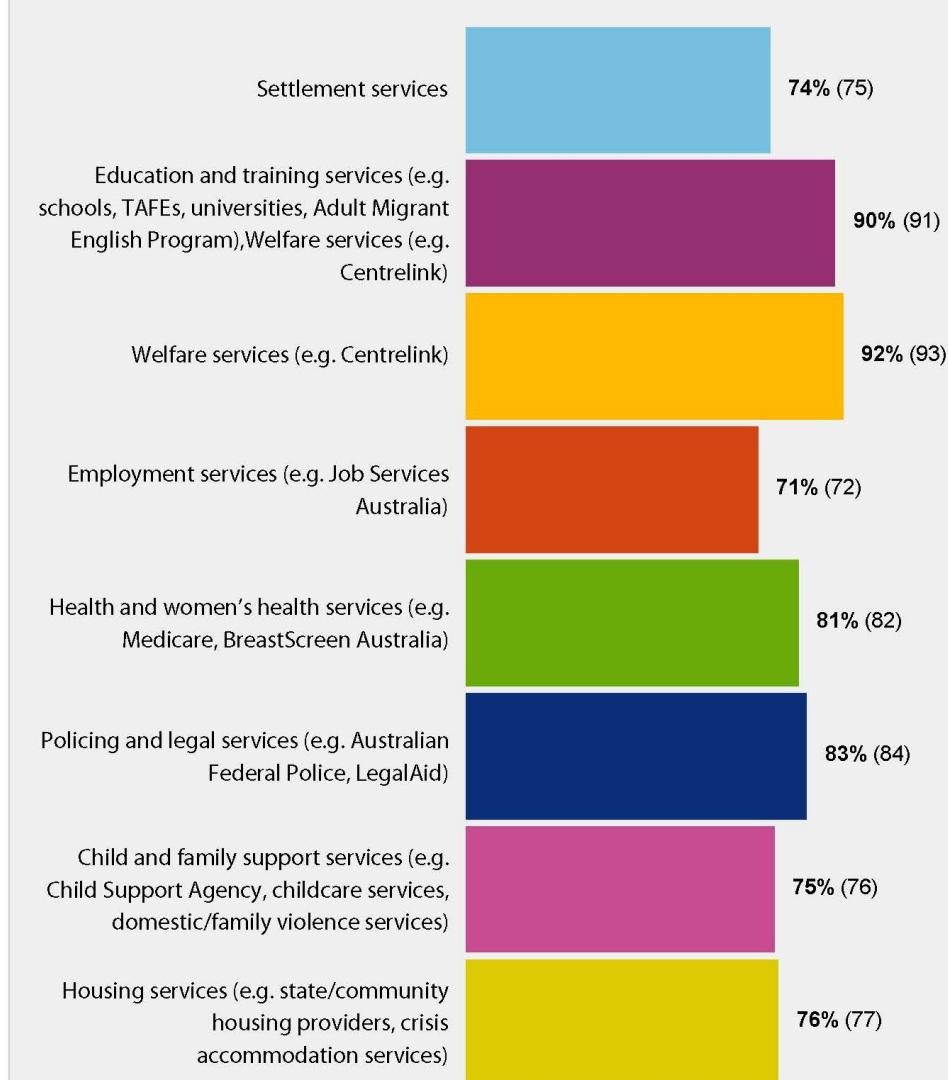
* 101 total responses, 100% of submissions

Did you receive an employer-sponsored or independent skilled migrant visa to Australia in the last 20 years?

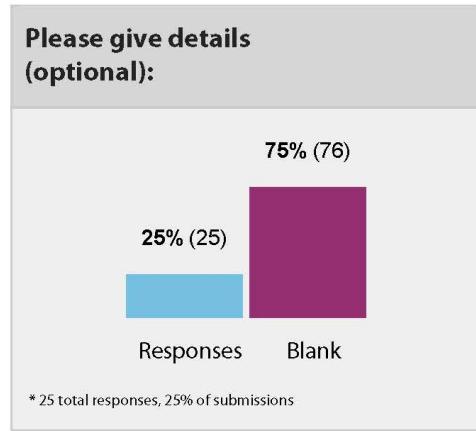
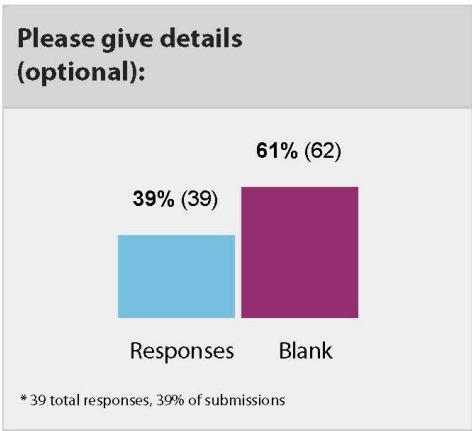
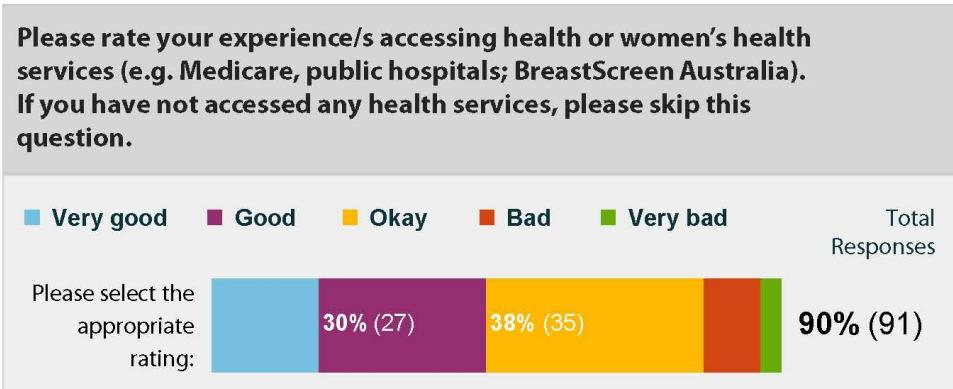
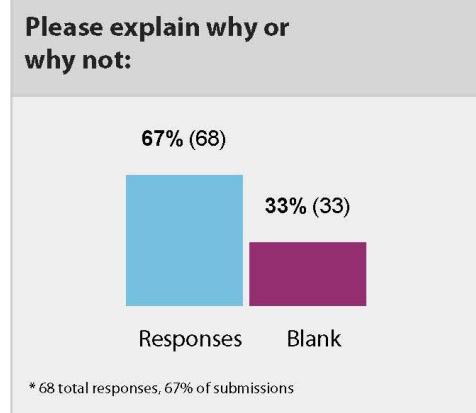
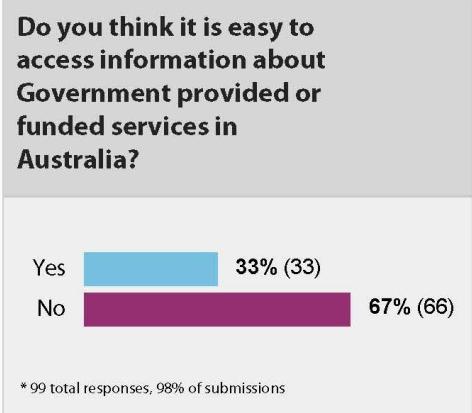


* 100 total responses, 99% of submissions

Are you aware of the following Government provided or funded service areas and organisations? (please tick all the organisations you have heard of)



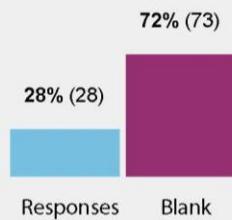
* 101 total responses, 100% of submissions



Please rate your experience/s accessing education and training services (Adult Migrant English Program, TAFE, university, apprenticeship)? If you have not accessed any education or training services, please skip this question.

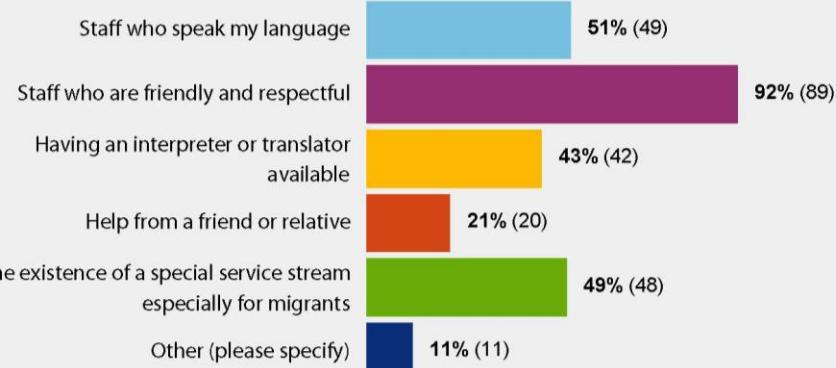


Please give details (optional):



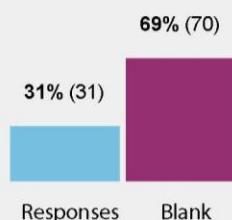
* 28 total responses, 28% of submissions

What is most helpful for you when you are seeking to access services from a Government agency or government-funded service provider? (please tick any that apply)



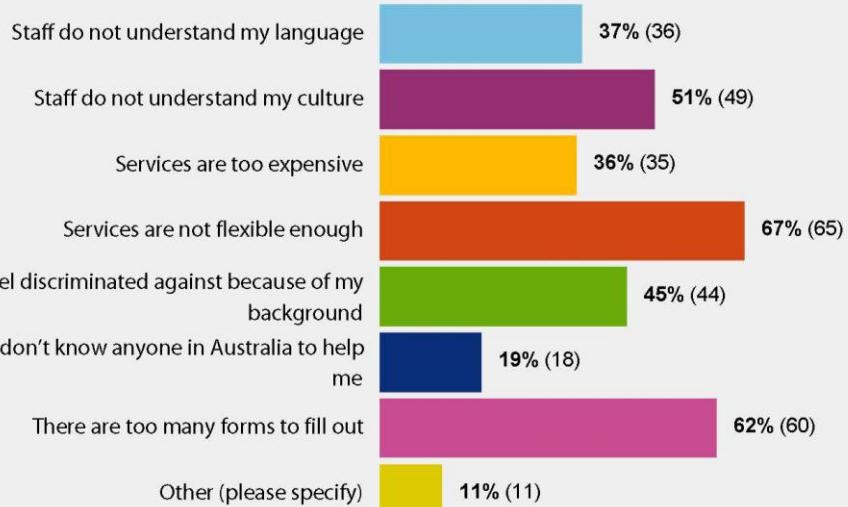
* 97 total responses, 96% of submissions

Please explain why you found this helpful:



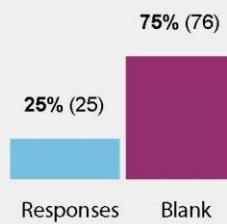
* 31 total responses, 31% of submissions

What is most difficult for you when you are seeking to access services from a Government agency or government-funded service provider? (please tick any that apply)



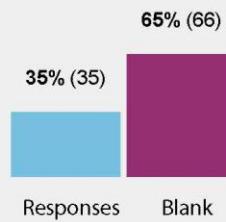
* 97 total responses, 96% of submissions

Please explain why you found this difficult:



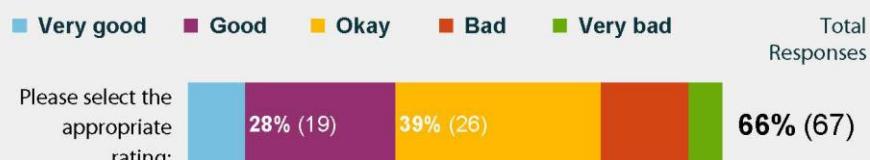
* 25 total responses, 25% of submissions

Do you wish to make any further comments about your experience/s accessing Government services, or tell us about your experience accessing a Government service apart from those mentioned in questions 10–13?



* 35 total responses, 35% of submissions

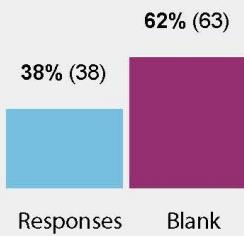
Please rate your experience/s accessing child or family support services (e.g. Child Support Agency; child care providers, domestic/family violence services)? If you have not accessed any child or family support services, please skip this question.



Please rate your experience/s accessing employment or welfare services (e.g. Centrelink, Job Services Australia)? If you have not accessed any employment or welfare services, please skip this question.



Please give details (optional):



* 38 total responses, 38% of submissions

