



Federal Election 2019- ECCWA Election Manifesto

Purpose

Australia's democratic system offers us the opportunity to voice our concerns and engage in the political processes of our nation. The Ethnic Communities Council of Western Australia (ECCWA) invites the community to consider a range of pertinent issues affecting our multicultural community when voting in the 2019 Federal Election. The ECCWA offers you its vision and thoughts in this document.

ECCWA is a non-party political organisation and the intention of this document is to facilitate a review of significant issues in our community to enable our constituents and supporters to cast "informed votes".

Contextual background

The 2016 Census shows that two thirds (67%) of the Australian population were born in Australia. Of the 6,163,667 overseas-born persons, nearly one in five (18%) had arrived since the start of 2012. Nearly half (49%) of Australians had either been born overseas or one or both of their parents had been born overseas.

While England and New Zealand were still the most common countries of birth after Australia, the proportion of those born overseas who were born in China and India has increased since 2011 (from 6.0% to 8.3%, and 5.6% to 7.4% respectively). The Philippines has swapped places with Italy in the top 10 list, moving from number 8 to number 6. Malaysia now appears in the top 10 countries of birth (replacing Scotland) and represents 0.6% of the Australian population.

Over 300 ancestries were separately identified in the 2016 Census. In 2016, there were over 300 separately identified languages spoken in Australian homes. More than one-fifth (21%) of Australians spoke a language other than English at home.

In 2016, Christianity was the main religion reported in Australia (52%). While the Islamic population made up only 2.6% of the total population, it was the second largest religion reported in the 2016 Census after Christianity. Islam was closely followed by Buddhism (2.4%). The 'No Religion' count increased to almost a third of the Australian population between 2011 and 2016 (22% to 30%).

<https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/2071.0~2016~Main%20Features~Cultural%20Diversity%20Data%20Summary~30>

Australia's population grew by 1.6% during the year ended 30 September 2018. Natural increase and net overseas migration contributed 39.2% and 60.8% respectively to total population growth for the year ended 30 September 2018.

<https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/mf/3101.0>

These demographic factors have to play a central role in the development of all federal government policies and programs.

Whilst Australia does not have a Human Rights Act or a Charter of Rights at the national or state levels, it is a signatory to international conventions that guarantee Human Rights. They include conventions on, inter alia, Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination, Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women, Rights of the Child, the Status of Refugees, Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Rights of Indigenous peoples. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in its preamble recognises the inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family as the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world. ECCWA supports all articles of the UDHR especially those outlined in Attachment A.

ECCWA supports all Human Rights and Equal Opportunity legislation in Australia and urges all parties not to implement policies that undermine any of them. Australia has made great strides in addressing the needs, concerns and aspirations of people with disabilities and it's high time that the Migration Act be modernised by removing the exclusion of the Disability Discrimination Act from its purview.

ECCWA strongly supports the Australian values of the Rule of the Law, fairness, equity etc. but asks that all parties ensure that no legislation discriminates intentionally or otherwise against minorities, for Rule of the Law would be meaningless otherwise. Likewise, it is critical that all parties not just acknowledge the significant contributions that migrants and refugees have made and continue to make to the social economic and cultural development of Australia, but ensure

that a fair share of the direct and indirect taxes that they contribute are returned in the form of culturally and linguistically appropriate services. It is not just migrants who come under skilled and independent categories that make a significant contribution to the nation's gross revenue. There are many government commissioned studies that demonstrate that all categories of migrants as well as refugees make a significant economic impact in terms of direct and indirect tax contributions, employment etc. The recent budget had a 5.4 per cent increase to the visa application fee for almost all visa sub-classes from July which is estimated to generate an extra \$275 million over four years. ECCWA believes this is an entitlement and not a privilege and this is further detailed under what we call mindless mainstreaming. In this regard we strongly recommend that the NDIS principles such as choice and control as well as reasonable and necessary be extended to **All** federally provided and funded services.

ECCWA has decided to adopt a two pronged approach to pursue the issues of concern to CaLD communities. It will pursue issues of particular relevance to CaLD communities through its own election campaign and pursue broader issues that impact the wider community including CaLD communities through initiatives and campaigns being undertaken by other community based organisations at the state and national levels.

ECCWA firmly believes that the incoming government should take into account the impact of a number of events within and outside Australia which have resulted in increasing anti-ethnic and anti-religious sentiments as well as prejudice which has made life difficult for the LGBTI community, thanks to the divisiveness and pejorative nature of the Marriage Equality debate.

From the perspectives of Human Rights and the aforementioned cultural, linguistic and faith diversity ECCWA advocates that all parties address the following significant issues.

1. Multiculturalism Act

Despite the aforementioned "super" cultural, linguistic and faith diversity, multiculturalism as a public policy continues to be ignored/challenged in concept and practice. Examples include marginalisation, alienation and racism directed at Islamic people; the unabated growth of white extremism; the unintended human rights impact of anti-terrorism legislation potentially threatens on particular communities; and the demonization and inhumane indefinite imprisonment of asylum seekers in off shore and immigration detention centres around Australia. So we cannot afford complacency if we hope to secure/safeguard the acceptance of and respect for equity, cultural diversity, community harmony and inclusion.

Accordingly, ECCWA proposes a Federal Act along the lines of what Victoria and Queensland

have (i.e. The Multicultural Victoria Act 2011 and Queensland Multicultural Recognition Act 2016). The proposed Act should also explore consideration of the provisions of the Religious Intolerance Act in Victoria.

2. Multiculturalism Framework

ECCWA recommends the national adoption of the framework established by the Gallop government which subsequent ALP and Coalition governments have endorsed. The four elements of that framework are the Multiculturalism Charter, the Anti-Racism Strategy, the Substantive Equality policy and the Language Services policy.

2.1 To achieve the goals and objectives of the proposed Federal Multiculturalism Act and the National Multiculturalism Charter, ECCWA advocates the establishment of a National Multicultural Commission, with equitable representation from all states and territories.

2.2 The recent Christchurch and Sri Lanka massacres have highlighted the urgent need for a **National Integrated Anti-Racism strategy** that addresses all forms of prejudice, discrimination and extremism. The One Nation Party's racist ideology has received a significant fillip with its senators attracting substantial funding from the AEC as payment for the primary votes that the party attracted in recent state and federal elections. This taxpayer funding of a party with explicit "racist" views/ policies need to be countered effectively by all levels of government and societal institutions and a well-funded anti-racism strategy should be implemented to achieve that objective. ECCWA also advocates the strengthening of the Racial Discrimination to incorporate inter alia provisions to address faith based prejudice, discrimination and vilification.

2.3 The increasing inequities in our society, especially with regard to indigenous, ethnic and faith minorities need to be addressed as a matter of urgency and that underscores the need for an effective substantive equality policy to replace the toothless Access and Equity policy.

2.4 The proposed National Language Services policy should address inter alia:

- The inadequacy of funding for the learning of community languages;
- The inadequacy of funding for Multicultural Community broadcasters (Immediate reversal of their funding freeze and increased funding has to be a priority);
- The inclusion of the cost of extending interpreting and translating services in all government managed and funded services. All agencies providing such services have to comply with the mandatory requirement to extend them to all those requesting it.

3. Mindless Mainstreaming

ECCWA is supportive of the public policy of mainstreaming but there is no place in our plural democratic society for it to be implemented in a mindless way. A classic example of this was the

Department of Health seeking expressions of interest for a three year project called Mental Health in Multicultural Australia and restricting the EoI to just three agencies all of which were mainstream! The federal government's procurement policies should urgently address this situation to ensure that EoIs for ethno specific/multicultural initiatives are restricted to organisations that have been established to service CaLD communities or whose customer base is predominantly from CaLD communities.

4. Immigration

Immigration has made a substantial contribution to the increase in Australia's population for decades. Until two or so decades ago Family reunion was a major objective of our Immigration program and this should be restored as a matter of urgency. In this regard a greater emphasis should be placed on facilitating the reunion of aged parents with their children in Australia.

As Australia continues to enjoy record employment figures compared to most countries in the world, we can afford to not only focus on a skilled migrant intake, but also increase our intake of asylum seekers and refugees. ECCWA advocates that **at least 15%** of our annual immigration intake be reserved for refugee and special humanitarian programs.

In recent years Australia has been applying the Health Waiver test to deny applications for residency in this country. This test discriminates against potential migrants with disability. This is in contravention of the provisions of the UNCRPD. This must be ceased. Further, this health waiver test has also been applied to applicants for tourist visas for a short term visit. This is highly inappropriate and reduces the decision to one that monetises and unitises the human applicant to one that looks at the cost burden to the taxpayer. As with Permanent Residency applications, this health waiver test must be eliminated. At the very least a "Net Tax Benefit" approach must be considered wherein the tax receipts obtained from the applicant family should be offset against the potential costs in order to calculate the cost to the taxpayer.

5. Off Shore processing of Asylum Seekers

ECCWA calls for an immediate end to off shore processing of Asylum seekers as well as their indefinite detention. Regional processing of their claims in Indonesia and Malaysia would be more humane and cost effective. Continuing to dog whistle rather than heed the wishes of the vast majority of Australians to treat asylum seekers humanely is not in anybody's interests.

6. Domestic and Family Violence

Family violence is of growing concern not just within the wider community but increasingly so amongst the CaLD communities. Whilst culturally

and linguistically appropriate support and advocacy services for victims are critical, much more needs to be done to reduce the number of perpetrators and the heinous family and domestic violence crimes they commit, especially within CaLD communities. National funding of programs should ensure CaLD services providers are in the mix on an equitable basis to provide the aforementioned services.

7. Work and Education: Dignity and Fairness in Employment and Unemployment

Successful labour market integration is defined as securing a job appropriate to one's qualifications, skills and experience. Employment outcomes of migrants can be unsatisfactory in at least three ways. A person can be: unemployed, that is welfare dependent but wanting to work; underemployed, that is working fewer hours than desired and possibly being partly welfare dependent; or occupationally downgraded, that is, having a job of considerably lower status than before migration, or having a job not commensurate with one's skills and educational qualifications.

Refugees overwhelmingly experience a loss of potential to use their human capital, finding themselves in jobs beneath their skills levels. They tend to be concentrated in certain unskilled or semi-skilled job market and find it difficult to be upwardly mobile from these. Moreover, recruitment procedures are very often enabling employers to apply their personal prejudices and informal discriminatory practices. The difficulties experienced by refugees suggest that discrimination based on visible difference, in the form of name, language ability, accent, appearance and religious customs, is a widespread problem in the Australian labour market and poses a major barrier to satisfactory employment outcomes for refugees.

Despite the aforementioned scenario there are no CaLD specialist Job Activ agencies and this has to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

Another important issue in terms of OSH, productivity etc. is to enhance the English proficiency of the CaLD workforce. IN the past this was done via the English in the Workplace federally funded program. ECCWA strongly recommends that a program such as that be implemented as a matter of urgency.

It is also ironic that when ACOSS, most peak bodies including ours and the Business Council of Australia are on the same page to end the poverty that New Start and Youth Allowance recipients have been subjected to for 25+ years, our political leaders are clearly not. We therefore have to be very worried about where we are heading as a country in upholding the values of fairness, egalitarianism etc. We therefore call upon the government and the ALP to end the unpardonable blight on our civil society by commit to a fair

increase in the rates of payment for the above, commencing July 2019.

8. Health and Mental Health

Australian health requirements for immigration ensure that migrants are of good, if not better health than the Australian-born population. However, as length of residence in Australia increases, research has indicated that the relative advantage that migrants have over Australian-born people tends to decrease. This 'equalising' effect is becoming increasingly more evident as the migrants of the 1950s and 1960s are now reaching ages at which they are at greater risk of a range of chronic illnesses, which will impact upon health services.

Some migrant and refugee groups continually face a range of problems when dealing with the Australian health care system. Access to appropriate mental health services, particularly for torture and trauma survivors, are extremely limited given the funding cuts in recent years.

ECCWA advocates the development of culturally appropriate models of preventative health care which sadly is visibly missing in our primary health plans and strategies. ECCWA also recommends disbanding of Primary Health Networks which have clearly not responded to the needs and concerns of ethnic communities and for the government to resume responsibilities for the same.

Another area where mainstreaming is rife is mental health and suicide prevention in particular. Attempted and completed suicides have increased significantly within ethnic communities but in most states and territories multicultural services providers do not get any funding for this purpose. This should be addressed as a matter of urgency by quarantining some of the Federal funding for this purpose.

9. CaLD Women, Youth, People with disabilities and members of new and emerging communities

ECCWA has chosen not to single out the above but strongly recommend that mechanisms are in place to ensure that **ALL** commonwealth funded and provided services are tailored such that the needs of these target groups are effectively met. Procurement and compliance polices and Compliance requirements

We will however highlight three issues i.e. Headspace centres are an important part of youth mental health and suicide prevention strategy but they are clearly not meeting the needs of CaLD youth effectively. We accordingly recommend that an equitable share of the \$461 million package assigned for youth mental health and suicide prevention be set aside for this.

The woeful neglect of NDIS is well documented and urgent measures are required to ensure its

smooth and effective implementation. In this regard specific measure are required to ensure that CaLD and indigenous people with disabilities have timely access to relevant information so that they are able to access multicultural disability service providers if that is how they wish to exercise their choice and control.

ECCWA strongly supports the need to hasten the achievement of gender equity in Australia. However, for it to be fair and meaningful is important that it not be considered in isolation of its trans-sectionality with ethnicity aboriginality and disability. If this is not heeded then the iniquitous situation of CaLD and Aboriginal women and women with disabilities will worsen.

Rationale for CaLD Gender Equity Charter

Whilst mainstream women have been making progress with regard to gender equity albeit at a much slower pace than desired; such improvements are not visible in the case of CaLD women.

If disaggregated data was available for the aforementioned findings of the Australian Human Rights Commission it will undoubtedly demonstrate that the situation of CaLD women can be compared to them being in a "concrete basement" rather than the "glass ceiling" that mainstream women find themselves in.

Data from the department of Immigration and Border Protection and the ABS census would strongly suggest that a significant proportion of CaLD women are highly educated and work in a range of professions. Yet they are significantly underrepresented in leadership roles in the private and public sectors in absolute and comparative terms; not just with Anglo Australian males but females as well.

CaLD women are also much more over-represented as part-time workers in low-paid industries and in insecure work than mainstream women.

As for discrimination, abuse, harassment etc., CaLD women are not only impacted by sexism and misogyny, they are also abused, harassed and discriminated against on the basis of their ethnicity and religion. If they happen to have a disability then their situation is further worsened in this regard.

Finally in terms of safety and security, the adverse impact of family violence on women of CaLD background is substantial and significantly under reported.

Purpose of the Charter:

This Charter seeks to raise the awareness of public authorities (commonwealth, state and local), other societal institution such as educational institutions, judiciary, corporate sector, agencies delivering services on behalf of government etc., to ensure

that they act consistently with the contents of this Charter to effectively achieve its objectives.

It also seeks to raise the awareness of all those (individuals, groups and agencies) advocating/campaigning for gender equity to ensure that their efforts have a positive impact not just for mainstream women but for CaLD and indigenous women too.

Objectives of the Charter

1. To promote and improve CaLD gender equity (including equal remuneration between women and men) in employment and income earned for the same.
2. To promote and improve CaLD gender equity in decision making mechanisms in all societal institutions.
3. To promote workplaces where indigenous and ethnic minority women are not abused, harassed or discriminated in any way.
4. To ensure CaLD women can live safely and securely without the threat of violence in its many forms.

Strategies

To achieve the above objectives ECCWA advocates inter alia the implementation of:

- Data Collection: agencies adequately identify existing ethnic minority and aboriginal women in their statistical data collection processes and practices.
- Reporting: agencies identify ethnic minority and aboriginal women in the reporting of the achievement of their equity targets.
- Community Engagement and Consultation – agencies undertake effective consultation practices for Indigenous and ethnic minority women.
- Diversity Training – the training currently available on gender equity be broadened to encompass the impact of cross sectionality of gender and aboriginality.

10. Multicultural Aged care services

Australia's CaLD population is ageing at a more rapid rate than their mainstream counterparts thanks to the massive inflows after the Second World War and in the 70s and 80s. Not surprisingly the demand for the Commonwealth Home Support Program is trending upwards but unfortunately the commonwealth's funding does not reflect this. A similar situation applies to Home Care Packages. The above services are woefully underfunded and the service gaps should be addressed urgently.

11. Settlement Services

The SETS program funding has been disastrous in WA and possible in most other parts of Australia. Restricting providers to particular service locations has not been based on factors such as their service record, physical presence in the relevant area etc. These decisions have clearly been made at the national level with little or no input from states and territories and the impact of this should be

reversed. The funding assigned for SETS is woefully inadequate and additional funding should be made available to all states and territories and funding decisions should be made by their DSS officials.

12. Services for migrants and refugees resident in Australia for more than 5 years

People in the above category are not eligible for Commonwealth's Settlement Services Program and many of them are missing out on mainstream services due to language and cultural barriers as well as other factors beyond their control. The SETS program should not be restricted to those who have been in Australia for up to 5 years or alternatively the Commonwealth should fund a separate service for the abovementioned group.

13. Services for CaLD population in Regional and Rural Areas

Australians who live in rural, regional and remote areas are generally disadvantaged by geographical distances and lack of access to a range of services.

Adequate public transport and the provision of reliable telephone coverage including high quality broadband internet connection are ongoing issues for many rural, regional and remote communities. Increasing petrol costs will also impact greatly on these communities, as prices are generally higher outside the metropolitan area.

ECCWA seeks policies which will address both the shortage and access to services and wider opportunities for these communities to participate in the program design of infrastructure and services for their region. ECCWA is also concerned about the lack of culturally appropriate services for migrants and their families (particularly in light of the skills shortage). The provision of settlement and other services are essential for successful integration into the community. Such services are mostly located in metropolitan areas and access to these services should be extended to those in regional and rural areas.

A comprehensive strategy should be developed to better address the needs of the above.

14. Indigenous Australians

ECCWA acknowledges the rights of Indigenous Australians as the traditional owners of this land and supports policies and strategies which empower Indigenous people to take control of their own lives and destinies. Indigenous Australians encounter racism on a daily basis. They have lower health and education outcomes than the non-Indigenous Australian community. Their morbidity rates for various diseases as well as their infant mortality rate are much higher. Their unemployment rates and housing situation are also much worse than other Australians.

We strongly supported the recognition of Native Title, a just and fair reconciliation process and

redress for families torn apart such as those outlined in the Stolen Generations report.

ECCWA supports policies, for Indigenous Australians which ensure culturally appropriate programs in the areas of health, housing, education, employment and welfare support. Programs and services should be delivered by mainstream agencies only where indigenous controlled agencies are unable to do so.

ECCWA supports the 250 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders resolution, in the '[Uluru Statement from the Heart](#)', to call for the establishment of a 'First Nations Voice' in the *Australian Constitution* and a 'Makarrata Commission' to supervise a process of 'agreement-making' and 'truth-telling' between governments and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. **The Australian government's rejection of this request should be reversed as a matter of urgency to ensure that we move forward in a constructive and inclusive way.**

15. Climate Change

Australia faces significant environmental and economic impacts from climate change across a number of sectors. Decisions made today will have lasting consequences for future generations. Much more needs to be done to address these impacts and one of the gaps is the urgent need to enhance climate change awareness within CaLD communities. <http://www.environment.gov.au/climate-change/climate-science-data/climate-science/impacts>

16. Foreign Aid

Australia's total foreign aid budget has remained at \$4.2 billion dollars for many years. This is very perplexing given that "push factors" that lead to mass movement of people seeking asylum are best addressed thorough well targeted foreign aid that can address those factors. By 2022/23, the foreign aid budget will be 11.8 per cent lower in real terms than it will be in this year's budget. An urgent reversal of this trend is strongly recommended.

Active Citizenship

The ECCWA is holding a pre-election public forum on 8th May 2019 at 20 View Street, N. Perth to enable people of CaLD backgrounds to be better informed about the policies of the major political parties on matters that concern them. ECCWA encourages CaLD communities to organise similar forums for their communities. Alternatively, we encourage conveying your concerns/issues by writing to:

- Your current local member and / or other local candidates;
- The leaders of all major political parties;
- Your local, regional and national newspaper.

Please also visit the websites of various political parties to obtain additional information on their respective policies.

Lastly, you must remember to vote. If you are not able to physically attend a polling centre, contact the Australian Electoral Commission on 13 23 26 or mail to: info@aec.gov.au

Attachment A.

Article 1 which states "all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood."

Article 2 which states inter alia "everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status."

Article 7 which states "all are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination."

Article 18 which states inter alia "everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion;....."

Article 19 which states inter alia "everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression;"

Article 21 which states inter alia "(1) Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives. (2) Everyone has the right of equal access to public service in his country."

Article 22 which states inter alia, "everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security...."

Article 23 which states inter alia "everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment. Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work."

Article 25 which states inter alia "everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, ..."

Article 26 which states inter alia "Everyone has the right to education....."

Article 29 which states (1) Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible. (2) In the exercise of his rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society. (3) These rights and freedoms may in no case be exercised contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations