

EQUITY

Ethnic Communities Council of WA Inc.



A fair and just society, one in which all people are encouraged to participate fully in the life of the community and are supported to reach their full potential, where diversity is valued and people live in harmony.



Summer 2017

DISCLAIMER

The views presented in EQUITY do not necessarily reflect those of the management or staff of the Ethnic Communities Council of Western Australia



May 2018 bring your family and your community good health, peace, prosperity and lots of laughter.

From all of us at ECCWA

Contents

| | Page |
|--|-------------|
| Editorial Social Cohesion in Australia | 3 |
| Government's Funding Restoration Commended | 4 |
| ECCWA's Stance Vindicated | 6 |
| Much to Celebrate but Sadly Much More to Fix | 6 |
| Suicides within Ethnic Communities | |
| Supporting Communities Forum | 8 |
| New NDIS-Agreement entered into by Messrs McGowan and Porter | 8 |
| Second National Social Cohesion Conference | 10 |
| Refugee Council of Australia (RCOA) Consultations | 10 |
| International Women's Day 2018 | 11 |
| Minister Papalia's Ministerial Advisory Group (MAG) | 12 |
| Maximising the cultural dividend CaLD Employment Strategy | 12 |
| Review of the Local Government Act 1995 | 12 |
| Commonwealth Redress Scheme | 12 |

Editorial

Christmas/New Year is a great time for reflection and thanksgiving and we decided to devote this editorial to sharing our views on social cohesion in Australia.

We should be very appreciative of the fact that we live in a country which from a relative perspective is one of the safest in the world and one which has a social safety net, albeit one that is not to everyone's satisfaction, including that of ECCWA.

We also have a society that has demonstrated its capacity to overcome the sharp divisiveness of issues such as marriage equality in a peaceful manner. If this was the case globally, many a situation that has led to mass movement of persecuted people could have been avoided. However, socially cohesive communities cannot be achieved without societies also valuing and ensuring fairness, justice and equity for all residents.

Regrettably, there are far too many issues of fairness, justice and equity that have remained in the too hard basket for far too long, in Australia and globally.

In the case of Australia and Western Australia, this editorial will canvass five issues but hasten to add there are many more that needs to be addressed.

Arguably the most important issue is that of Aboriginal recognition. The Turnbull government asked the Referendum Council to consider all the options on the constitutional recognition of indigenous people and to undertake consultations with indigenous people. After exhaustive consultations the Council unanimously recommended that "recognition should be a constitutionally entrenched Indigenous Voice to parliament."

In its media release the Government claimed it "does not believe such an addition to our national representative institutions is either desirable or capable of winning acceptance in a referendum." Despite, knowing what was being recommended was anything but a national representative institution with legislative powers, the government not only rejected its recommendation but blatantly attacked the Referendum Council by misrepresenting its position that "It would inevitably become seen as a third chamber of Parliament". From a social cohesion perspective that was deeply disturbing.

More than 50 years ago (1967 Referendum) Australians voted overwhelmingly to amend the Constitution to allow the Commonwealth to make laws for Aboriginal people and include them in the census. Of the 94 per cent voters who participated in the referendum an overall majority of almost 91 per cent voted 'Yes' vote, in all six states.

The Government's belief that "such a radical change to our constitution's representative institutions has no realistic prospect of being supported by a majority of Australians in a majority of States" flies in the face of the 1967 Referendum outcomes.

Since 1945, when Australia's immigration department was established it has had several iterations linking it with portfolios such as Settlement, Citizenship, Multicultural Affairs and most recently border protection. In a very retrograde and astounding move it has now become a part of the newly created Department of Home Affairs which brings together Australia's federal law enforcement, national and transport security, criminal justice, emergency management, multicultural affairs and immigration and border-related functions and agencies.

Prime Minister Turnbull has consistently claimed that multiculturalism is the glue that holds our diverse society together and if this were the case one would have expected him to make it part of the Prime ministerial portfolios as was the case decades ago.

Unintentionally or otherwise he is signalling that immigration and multiculturalism are “security threats” and problematic from a social cohesion perspective by linking them with ASIO, the AFP, Border Force, the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission, the Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre, and the Office of Transport Security. It is ECCWA’s belief that immigration should be a standalone portfolio, and that multiculturalism should revert to the Prime Minister’s portfolio. It will argue this case in the lead up to the next Federal election.

Australia is a plural democratic society and not a theocracy and discrimination or vilification on the basis of religion is just as repugnant as those based on gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability etc. Legislation to protect those belonging to faiths/religions other than Judaism and Sikhism, (which fortunately are covered under existing Equal Opportunity and Racial Discrimination legislation) should be enacted as a matter of urgency.

ECCWA accepts that “Mainstreaming” is an important strategy from a social cohesion perspective. However, in the 21st century, in a plural democratic society like Australia, mainstreaming cannot be a “mindless” government’s policy prescription. A classic example of this was the Commonwealth government seeking expressions of interest for its \$3.9 million 'Mental Health in Multicultural Australia' project. It pursued a closed tender which was limited to three mainstream agencies. Given the dire state of mental health of ethnic communities nationally, such actions can only be described as mindless mainstreaming.

Finally, bodies such as ECCWA have a crucial role to play to promote social cohesion and this is a respectful reminder to the state government that it has been in office for nine months and it cannot continue to ignore this issue as one that was created by its predecessor. ECCWA labelled its predecessors decision as being symptomatic of institutional racism, and that description has not changed simply because of a change in government which now has the responsibility to rectify it.

McGowan Government’s Funding Restoration Commended



The Hon. Paul Papalia MLA, CSC, Minister for Tourism; Racing and Gaming; Small Business; Defence Issues; Citizenship and Multicultural Interests at the Christmas function of the Italo-Australian Welfare and Cultural Centre announced the McGowan Government’s decision to recommence the funding of the Italian Insertion Program by approving \$720,000 for the next three years, at the Christmas event.

The spontaneous thunderous response of the multicultural audience highlighted the fact that the decision of the Barnett government to cease funding of this program was short sighted and ill-advised.

ECCWA in its 2017 State Election manifesto, argued that “the changes made by the Barnett government are not in the best interests of ensuring quality teaching/learning of community languages”. So in ECCWA’s view the aforementioned decision is commendable and a good beginning in the right direction.

In announcing the funding for the In-School Insertion Programme, Minister Papalia said “the new structure will provide funding for the In-School Insertion Programme without affecting the budget currently allocated to the community languages schools for the delivery of the After School Hours Programme.”

In response, the President of the Italo Australian Welfare and Cultural Centre, Enzo Sirna, said “the recognition and the confirmation of the reinstatement of funding for our insertion class programme has also reintroduced a key word of immense importance to the Italian community – respect.”

What is extremely pleasing about the Minister’s decision is the fact that he has restored this funding without being divisive, (i.e. without diminishing the funding for other languages covered by the Community Languages program) which unfortunately was the approach taken by his predecessor, when he ceased the funding for the Italian Insertion Program.

2017-18 ECC Management Committee

Office Bearers

| | |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| President | Ramdas Sankaran |
| Senior Vice President | Kim Luby |
| Treasurer | Rahim Ghauri |
| Secretary | Suresh Rajan |
| Vice President | Vivienne Pillay |

Management Committee Members

Carmelita Baltazar, Pius Joseph, Nasreen Lang, Ranjit Ratnayake, Yahye Sheikh-Abdi, Sarina Sirna, Anne Tonje, Alphonse Toussaint and Jan Williams

Two of the five Office bearer positions and five of the nine other management committee positions are held by women. When the Vice President Youth Issues and the MC Member for Regional representation it is expected that women will hold the majority of positions. Once the Vice President Youth and the regional representatives are appointed, we expect the gender split of the Office bearer positions will be 50:50 and the management committee members will comprise six women and 4 men.

In the newly elected management committee there are three CEOs of multicultural and mainstream providers, a former Manager for South and Western Australia for what was then Australia’s third largest Employment Services provider and a former Manager of a Women’s Domestic Violence service.

Besides the committee has representatives of established and new and emerging communities and the aforementioned members backgrounds include people born in Australia, Philippines, Zimbabwe, Sri Lanka, Italy, Kenya, Ukraine, Ethiopia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Malaysia, Pakistan and India. The ages of members ranges from the twenties to the sixties and they are from many religious/faith backgrounds.

The committee also has social workers, accountants, teachers, former and current public servants and people with substantial service delivery experience in the mainstream and multicultural services sectors.

ECCWA is seeking expressions of interest for membership of its subcommittees on Women, Youth, Human Rights, Disability, Employment, Education and Training and Housing. Please send expressions of Interests to Suresh Rajan via email suresh@iinet.net.au

ECCWA's Stance Vindicated

ECCWA was very mindful of the differences and the sensitivities involved but ultimately its decision to support the Yes option was based on Human Rights. The resounding victory for Marriage Equality in all states and territories and especially Western Australia was therefore a victory for Human Rights and a vindication of the stance that it adopted.

There are many lessons to be learnt for all Australians and one of them is, Human Rights are not divisible. Bodies like ECCWA had to take a stance on such issues regardless of how complex and divisive it may be, to ensure that rather than turning the other way, it took a position that was consistent with its position on other human rights issues.

The Marriage Equality debate and the outcome of the postal survey have had a significant focus on religious freedoms and protection and understandably so. But sadly this heightened awareness and focus on religion has not also raised the issue of addressing religious discrimination and vilification.

We live in a plural democratic society and not a theocracy and discrimination or vilification on the basis of religion is just as repugnant as those based on gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability etc.

So in its media release the ECCWA president said "Our Council will therefore continue to advocate for legislation to protect those belonging to faiths/religions

other than Judaism and Sikhism, which fortunately are covered under existing Equal Opportunity and Racial Discrimination legislation."

Another significant lesson, especially for migrants and refugees who hail from non-democratic forms of government, that emerged from the postal survey outcome was the importance of accepting/respecting the majority outcome of a poll.

The willingness of hard-line parliamentarians who spear headed the No campaign to readily accept the poll verdict and to provide assurances that they would work constructively with the proponents of the Yes vote was impressive.

The last but not least important lesson from the postal survey is for our political parties. Most electorates which recorded a majority No vote or had significant numbers of the electorate voting No, have disproportionate numbers of ethnic/religious minority Australians. Such voting patterns reinforce our contention that Politicians who continue to ignore the views, concerns and aspirations of ethnic minorities do so at their peril.

PS: ECCWA extends its congratulations to Senator Dean Smith and the overwhelming majority of members of both Houses of Parliaments who supported his bill on Marriage Equality, which became law on 7th December 2017.

Much to Celebrate but Sadly Much More to Fix

The UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination expressed concern about the deterioration in Australia's treatment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, ethnic minority communities, refugees and people seeking asylum. It has warned that "expressions of racism, racial discrimination, and

xenophobia, including in the public sphere and political debates as well as the media, are on the rise" and has urged the Australian Government to "Bring every person held offshore to safety in Australia; Respect the self-determination of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples; Invest in anti-racism measures and appropriate services for

people from ethnic minority communities; and Reform youth justice systems around Australia and raise the age of criminal responsibility.”

In its media release, ECCWA argued, “these findings are a timely reminder for all Australians to reflect on Human Rights in Australia and globally and do all they can to address the violations of such Rights. As a member of the United Nations Human Rights Council “Australia has a moral and ethical responsibility to set an example by addressing human rights abuses and systemic discrimination within Australia and our Council calls upon the Federal, State and Territory governments to set an example by doing all they can to address the aforementioned findings”.

Despite the divisive debate that accompanied the marriage equality postal survey we have good reason to celebrate, for we have finally legalised marriage between two people regardless of their gender, sexual orientation etc. Let’s hope we will soon also make religious vilification illegal in Australia.

ECCWA has consistently supported the stance that Human Rights are indivisible and Australians regardless of our gender, cultural, ethnic, faith or other backgrounds cannot cherry pick which human rights need protection and which can be violated or ignored. There is no place for apathy or fatigue when it comes to the violation of Human Rights, be it in Australia or elsewhere in the world and systemic advocacy is critical in this regard.

Suicides within Ethnic Communities

In its media release Don't Coloured Lives Matter, ECCWA called upon the State and Commonwealth governments to address the dire state of the mental health of ethnic communities as a matter of urgency.

Fifteen suicide deaths within ethnic communities between January and August this year, is a wakeup call for the Commonwealth and State governments.

On the occasion of the 2017 International Human Rights Day, ECCWA called upon the Australian Government to follow the examples WA, Victorian and Tasmanian to swap Harmony Day for Harmony week. It is unconscionable that in the 21st Century, the federal government and the other state and territories continue to celebrate Harmony Day on 21st March, which the United Nations designates as the International Day for the elimination of Racial Discrimination to commemorate the Sharpeville Massacre.

ECCWA commends initiative of newest member organisation

ECCWA has commended the initiative of its newest member organisation, Until We Return Vocal Group, which organised a Forum to focus on the Human Rights abuses in Sudan and Eritrea. Economic benefits that can accrue to Australia, can’t compromise our stance on Human Rights” was an important issue that was raised at the Forum.

Other important issues raised at the forum were about the importance of advocacy to address systemic discrimination and for ethnic minorities to become more aware and understanding of human rights and discrimination issues within the indigenous communities and other ethnic groups.

ECCWA urges other member organisations to follow their example.

WA was the first state in Australia to establish a Multicultural psychiatric Centre. Governments, both Coalition and ALP, scaled it down and in 2016 the Barnett government ceased its operations.

To have done that when the state's ethnic minority population was increasing in size and diversity was astounding.

Ethnic minority Western Australians, like their Anglo Australian counterparts, are taxpayers and are entitled to mental health services that are culturally and linguistically appropriate.

Whilst the state's Mental Health 2020 and Suicide 2020 Plans have well-articulated what is required to address the mental health needs of Ethnic minority Western Australians, sadly their implementation is yet to eventuate.

The Commonwealth government has been equally negligent in addressing this matter. It recently sought expressions of interest for its 'Mental Health in Multicultural Australia' project and its closed tender was limited to three mainstream agencies.

Given the dire state of mental health of ethnic communities, such actions can only be described as mindless mainstreaming. It is extremely disturbing that in the 21st century, in a plural democratic society like Australia, such mindless mainstreaming can be a government's policy prescription.

The Prime Minister has often asserted that multiculturalism is the glue that holds our society together. That glue will wear thin if such **mindless mainstreaming** continues. Unless the State and Commonwealth governments addresses the matter of suicide prevention and post-vention support for ethnic communities urgently and appropriately, ECCWA will continue to ask, don't coloured lives matter.

Dr Indira Pattni, MSCWA's Clinical Psychologist and ECCWA President Ramdas Sankaran made a presentation at the September meeting of the Ministerial Council on Suicide Prevention which was well received. They agreed to take up the issues of lack of funding for suicide prevention within ethnic communities with the Mental Health Commissioner. But it is unlikely that there will be significant changes in the foreseeable future.

If the current rate of suicides continue ECCWA will have no option but to request the State Coroner, to hold a coronial inquiry which hopefully will place further pressure on the commonwealth and state governments to take necessary action to address this.

Supporting Communities Forum

The McGowan Government is committed to working with the community services sector to maximise opportunities to deliver quality services, by building a relationship based on partnership, collaboration and mutual respect between both sectors. This work will also support the directions of the Machinery of Government reforms and the recommendations emerging from the Service Priority Review.

The Supporting Communities Forum's function is to support implementation of the State Government's Supporting Communities Policy

The Supporting Communities Forum will convene four times per year, and report regularly to the Community Safety and Family Support Cabinet Sub Committee and annually to the Premier

The Forum is chaired by Michelle Scott and the Deputy Chairperson is Helen Creed. It also has 14 members and the gender balance of the forum is commendable with women accounting for 75% of the membership. The indigenous membership is also commendable with 25% being of indigenous background. In stark contrast, **the multicultural sector accounts for just 6.25% of the Forum's membership** and whilst there are many peaks represented in the Forum, the multicultural sector's is not. This is still albeit marginally better than the Barnett government's Partnership Forum which had Zero multicultural sector membership.

New NDIS-Agreement entered into by Messrs McGowan and Porter

The McGowan state government has decided to ditch the agreement that was entered into by the Barnett government with the Commonwealth and from 1st July 2018 the NDIS in WA will be implemented by the NDIA, on the same basis as the

other states and territories. This was the outcome that ECCWA lobbied for and in our view it is a far a better option for CaLD Western Australians with Disabilities.

ECCWA is a member of NDIA's Hills Advisory Group and its President chairs its CaLD reference Group. ECCWA will continue to play a constructive and collaborative role in ensuring CaLD people with disabilities can smoothly transfer to/transition into the NDIS.

NDIS in Western Australia

From 1 July 2018, the NDIA will assume responsibility for the delivery of the NDIS in WA. The NDIS will continue to roll out on a geographic basis and will be fully rolled out across Western Australia by 2020.

The NDIA and Western Australian governments are committed to ensuring the transition process is managed carefully and supports participants, families and carers and providers.

WA NDIS clients

People already taking part in the WA NDIS will transfer to the nationally-delivered NDIS in a phased approach from April 2018. The transfer of people from the WA NDIS will conclude by December 2018.

People transferring from the WA NDIS to the nationally delivered scheme will be contacted by the Western Australian Government to advise them of the next steps they need to take.

New NDIS participants

From 1 July 2018 the nationally-delivered NDIS will begin to be available to new participants based on where they live. For detailed information on where and when the NDIS will be available in WA, visit link below.

<https://www.ndis.gov.au/about-us/our-sites/WA/rollout.html>

Existing NDIS participants

For existing NDIS participants nothing changes. Current NDIS plans remain unchanged and any upcoming plan reviews will go ahead with the NDIA.

You can read the press release from the Prime Minister from link below.

<https://www.pm.gov.au/media/western-australia-join-nationally-delivered-ndis>

Western Australia - Questions and answers for information about the transition to the NDIS in WA can be accessed from link below.

<https://www.ndis.gov.au/about-us/our-sites/WA/qanda.html>

There will be information sessions for people with disability and service providers ahead of the progressive roll out of the NDIS. Visit the NDIS events in WA page at link below to find to find out about information sessions in your area.

<https://www.ndis.gov.au/news/events/wa.html>

Getting started

For people with disability, their families and carers, the My NDIS Pathway page is the best starting point for information about the NDIS, how to access the NDIS and about the planning process. It can be accessed from

<https://www.ndis.gov.au/participants/planning-process.html>

For service providers who have not already registered with the NDIS the Provider Toolkit is a user-friendly online tool that takes providers through the seven steps of the Provider Pathway and includes step-by-step guides, videos, FAQs and interactive e-learning activities.

It can be accessed from

<https://providertoolkit.ndis.gov.au/>

Office locations

The NDIS office in the Perth Hills area of Western Australia is open from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday at 78-80 Railway Parade, Midland. As additional NDIA offices open in Western Australia they will be added to the locations page link below.

<https://www.ndis.gov.au/about-us/locations.html#wa>

Second National Social Cohesion Conference

The above conference organised by the University of New South Wales featured a number of notable Australian and international speakers on a wide range of topics.



Hon Philip Maxwell Ruddock Mayor of Hornsby with Ramdas and Pius



Dr. Sev Ozdowski AM, Conference Convenor, with conference participants



Dr. Anne Aly, Member for Cowan, Mary Patestos, FECCA Chair and Hon. Tony Burke Shadow Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Australia with conference participants

ECCWA was a bronze sponsor and its banner was on stage for the period of the conference. Questions raised by ECCWA representatives include, why states other than WA, Victoria and Tasmania continue to celebrate of Harmony Day on a day that the UN has decreed to commemorate the Sharpeville Massacre.

Refugee Council of Australia (RCOA) Consultations

RCOA in partnership with ECCWA and MSCWA organised two consultations (one for refugee & migrant communities and the other for service providers on what governments should do to better help refugees) and many issues of concerns were raised which I have already conveyed to Minister Papalia.

The issues raised include:

1. Australia can and should significantly increase its Refugee and Humanitarian Intake (Figure of at least 30,000 was mentioned)
2. It is disconcerting to note that UNHCR initiated refugee resettlement in Australia has been falling sharply.
3. There should be an immediate one-off intake of Rohingas like the Syrian Intake initiated by the Abbot government
4. It is pleasing to note that in recent times there has been an increase in the number of people with disabilities entering Australia as refugees/Humanitarian entrants and this should continue.
5. Other priority groups that should be considered include women fleeing family violence, families of Australians trapped in Syria and other war-torn countries.
6. Religious affiliation should not be a factor in the determining who are chosen for entry under the Humanitarian program.
7. Some Humanitarian entrants are waiting as long as 3-4 months for their

- Disability Support pensions to be assessed.
8. Refugees and Humanitarian entrants should have far greater access to the Family Migration component of our Immigration intake for purposes of family reunion, which has been integral to our immigration policies since the 1950s. Participants were very supportive of the views expressed in RCOA's report "Addressing pain of separation for refugee families," which can be accessed from RCOA's website.
 9. The state government should provide access to public schools, TAFEs etc. for asylum seekers and for refugees on temporary visas". RCOA's report "Barriers to education" which can be accessed from its's website is very informative.
 10. Job Activ program is failing migrants and refugees. Detailed information is available from the RCOA publication that can be accessed from the following link [Not Working: Experiences of refugees and migrants with Jobactive](#) Very few residents of Mirrabooka and surrounding areas are accessing the OMI funded Global Workforce Program.
 11. State and commonwealth government funding for Specialist Employment services is critical but it is essential that mainstream agencies that claim such expertise but whose boards, staff, policies etc. don't reflect it are excluded unless they have demonstrated experience in providing culturally and linguistically appropriate services.
 12. Mainstream agencies are obtaining a disproportionate share of OMI grants program especially they unlike ethno-specific and multicultural service providers access the vast majority of funds available through agencies other than OMI.
 13. The non-involvement of ethno-specific and multicultural service providers in the State Settlement planning mechanisms is of concern. The state

government should revert to what used to be the model during the Gallop government.

14. We need to adopt a Regional Development Strategy to promote regional settlement of refugees as many of them come from regional areas within their countries of origin and would prefer to settle in non-metropolitan areas.
15. people seeking asylum recently cut off SRSS income support (both those brought here for medical treatment AND those who have at any time sent even small amounts of money home e.g. \$50 for a funeral).
16. Whole of WA (including Perth) to be classified as a SHEV zone, as in South Australia, and Tasmania

Better Choices: Youth in WA discussion paper

The Better Choices: Youth in WA discussion paper outlines a new youth strategy being developed by the WA Government that will make a positive difference to young people in Western Australia. The strategy will improve the delivery of programs and services to support people aged 10 – 25 years. ECCWA's response to the paper will soon be uploaded to its website.

International Women's Day 2018

Planning is underway for ECCWA's event to celebrate International Women's Day. ECCWA welcomes sponsors as well as volunteers to make the event at least as successful as the ones held in recent years which attracted more about 200 participants annually.

An IWD subcommittee with Vivien Pillay as Chair will be responsible for planning and implementing the event. If you wish to volunteer your service or be a sponsor, Vivienne can be contacted on kel162@hotmail.com

Ministerial Advisory Group (MAG)

Minister Papalia has appointed a 16-member group to act as a consultative body on issues facing culturally and linguistically diverse communities. The MAG is expected to provide the State Government with direct grassroots feedback and advice on relevant policies, issues and needs of the culturally and linguistically diverse (CaLD) communities of Western Australia.

ECCWA commends the Minister for having included it in the MAG, unlike his predecessor. Membership and other details of MAG can be accessed from <https://www.mediastatements.wa.gov.au/Pages/McGowan/2017/07/Multicultural-Advisory-Group-appointed.aspx>

The Minister has also appointed Ms Janine Freeman MLA, (Chair), Ms Maria Osman, Mr Iqbal Samnakay, Dr Edward Zhang and Ramdas Sankaran to review the state's Multicultural Policy Framework. The subcommittee will then examine, what strategies and mechanisms are required to implement the State's Multiculturalism Charter which is being updated.

Minister Papalia has also established a committee to review OMI's Community Grants Program. The Review Committee is co-chaired by Ms Freeman MLA and Ms Ellwood (OMI's Acting Executive Director) and its membership also includes MAG members, Mr Khan, Ms Shengeb and Dr Tungaraza.

Both reviews will provide for community consultations and ECCWA urges its members and other stake holders to participate to ensure that desired outcomes are achieved.

Maximising the Cultural Dividend: CaLD Employment Strategy

The Public Service Commission is working on a "Maximising the cultural dividend CaLD Employment Strategy", which will be released in early 2018.

Review of the Local Government Act 1995

MAG members provided feedback to the Department's draft consultation paper and ECCWA understands that there will be a formal Review of the Local Government Act 1995 in 2018.

ECCWA will make a submission to the Review when its terms of reference are announced.

Commonwealth Redress Scheme

The Commonwealth's response to recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse's *Redress and Civil Litigation Report* includes establishing the Commonwealth Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse.

The Scheme is intended to operate for a 10-year period from 1 July 2018 and includes: providing a payment of up to \$150 000 to survivors; providing access to counselling and psychological services to survivors; and facilitating a direct personal response to survivors from the responsible institution, should the survivor request one.

The Department for Social Services contracted CultureVerse a consulting company to obtain feedback on, inter alia:

- The best messages (words) to tell people about the scheme so that people who are eligible for redress are aware of the scheme, understand how it works and how they can apply.
- The best channels to tell people about the scheme (e.g. social media, newspapers), and
- How to avoid confusion or unnecessarily upsetting people when telling them about the scheme.

ECCWA participated in this consultation and hopefully its views will be taken into account in implementing this scheme in a manner which makes it accessible to CaLD people who are eligible for it.

Karen New Year

The Karen Welfare Association celebrated the 2757 Karen New Year in Perth on 18th December 2017. The celebration included a brief talk about Karen New Year History and a showcasing traditional Karen dances and performances. Ms Janine Freeman representing Premier McGowan acknowledged the significant contribution that the Karen community has made to Western Australia.



Hon Margaret Quirk, Member for Girrawheen with Ramdas Sankaran & Joansy Pegrum



Karen New Year Performers



Karen New Year Performers

Malay Cultural Event

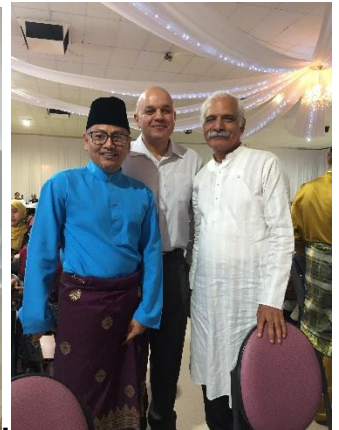
The Malay Association of Western Australia, celebrated its cultural event of the year on 19 November.

There were several guests from University Science of Malaysia that are keen to explore “working together with Western Australia” and the event showcased many aspects of Malay Culture and Heritage.

The Member for North Metropolitan Region the Hon Martin Pritchard MLC represented Premier McGowan and Antonio Krsticevic Shadow Minister for Local Government; Heritage; Culture and the Arts; Citizenship and Multicultural Interests represented Dr. Mike Nahan, Leader of the opposition.



Hadi Assanteh JP Malay Association President

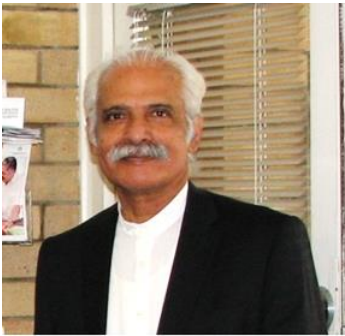


Antonio Krsticevic with Hadi & Ramdas



Malay Cultural Event of the Year Performers

President's Musings



The editorial and the articles in this issue of Equity highlight some of the priority issues that ECCWA believes have to be dealt with by governments and societal

institutions. ECCWA will do all it can to advocate and lobby for the changes required to effectively address them.

We lobbied WACOSS, Shelter, CEWA etc. to ensure that the Supporting Communities Forum, which replaced the Barnett government's Partnership Forum had multicultural sector representation. The gender balance and indigenous membership of the forum are commendable with women accounting for 75% and people of indigenous background comprising 25% of the membership.

Our efforts bore some fruit in gaining representation for multicultural sector. However, it is still underrepresented, **(6.25% of the Forum's membership)** with the membership being limited to Maria Osman, a former Executive Director of OMI and former Vice President of our Council.

In the Autumn edition of Equity I indicated that "whilst ECCWA is yet to discuss, let alone receive, any assurances from the Minister that its core funding would be restored, it is hard to imagine that the McGowan government would continue the institutional racism that was perpetuated by the Barnett government in the way it treated ECCWA's funding compared to mainstream peak organisations."

We are deeply disappointed that ECCWA is still not receiving the proverbial brass razoo from the McGowan government since it was elected in March last year.

What ECCWA is seeking by way of funding from the state government is a small

fraction of the funding that it provides other peak bodies and a miniscule fraction of its Citizenship and Multiculturalism budget.

However, we are pleased that the government has invested \$842,000 over 15 months to projects delivered directly by multicultural organisations or local governments to build the capacity of CaLD communities and provide local employment.

ECCWA is extremely pleased that mental health and suicide prevention are of significant concern to the state government and that the state budget included funding of \$61.7 million over four years to increase mental health support and treatment options.

Tragically, despite the sad reality of the disproportionate numbers of ethnic people attempting self-harm and suicide (and unfortunately completing them), currently not a single cent is being spent for multicultural/multilingual suicide prevention and postvention services. Furthermore, government funded/provided multicultural clinical mental health services are woefully inadequate.

WA is becoming increasingly diverse, with thirty two percent of the Western Australian community being born overseas, and 16.6% being born in non-main English speaking countries.

ECCWA is the only peak umbrella ethnic advocacy/lobbying agency in WA and has been effectively fulfilling this function since 1979.

Often it has been the lone public voice that responds to issues of concerns to ethnic communities and the restoration of its funding would be in keeping with Section "76 a, b, c and f" of the ALP's Multicultural Interests Policy Platform. We therefore urge Minister Papalia to restore the core funding of ECCWA, as a matter of priority and thank him in advance for the same.