



ECCWA commends the changes to AMEP

The Ethnic Communities Council of WA today commended the Morrison government on its decision to overhaul the AMEP program. Acting Immigration Minister Alan Tudge will announce changes to the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) at the National Press Club on Friday, which includes the lifting of the cap on class hours and removing the five year time limit in which those eligible can access the scheme.

The AMEP currently provides most migrants 510 hours of free language tuition. ECCWA did a study of the English lessons program some years ago and found that on average some of the participants in the program were taking up to 7 years to finish their “free” hours.

ECCWA President Suresh Rajan said “We commend the Morrison Government on their decision to overhaul the program. We agree that English language expression at conversational level is vital to the integration of people in our community. There are however, a couple of riders that we mention. Firstly for people to be able to access these classes there needs to be such things as culturally appropriate child care facilities. Years ago, we had an Ethnic Childcare Resource Unit, funded by the Federal Government. That is no longer the case. When people come in to this country, particularly from a Humanitarian background, the priority is usually survival and dealing with the mental health issues resulting from a war torn, torture and trauma background. English lessons become less critical. So we emphasise that these other matters need to be attended to with just as much of a priority”

“The other matter that we raise relates to the likelihood of our ageing CaLD population to be diagnosed with Dementia and Alzheimer’s. One of the issues with these conditions is a reversion to first language. Often the learning of English can mean a loss of their own native language. This will mean that if they do revert to first language it will lead to a loss of ability to communicate with their children and loved ones who have now become English speakers with no native language ability. So, we are supportive of the need to learn English but we also ask that people consider the issues of retention of their own language, if possible” said Mr Rajan.

For Media Enquiries please contact Suresh Rajan on 0403 276 960