



**Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria's (ECCV) Response  
To  
The Development of the Brimbank Learning Strategy  
At the Brimbank City Council  
November 2009**

**Background**

1. Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria (ECCV) advocates and lobbies all levels of government on behalf of multicultural communities in a range of areas especially aged care. Our role includes supporting, consulting, liaising with and providing information to Victoria's ethnic communities.
2. Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria (ECCV) welcomes the opportunity to provide input to the Brimbank Learning Strategy at the Brimbank City Council.

**Diversity Framework**

3. ECCV supports the concept of diversity that encompasses acceptance and respect for all Victorians' differences in relation to ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities and religious beliefs.

**Seniors from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds**

4. ECCV is concerned that a considerable number of seniors from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds have cultural preferences and limited English language competence which can impact on their access to lifelong learning.
5. ECCV acknowledges that within the framework of diversity, a significant proportion of Victoria's population of seniors would benefit from a focus on culturally competent services. By 2011 approximately 38% of people over 65 years in the Melbourne metropolitan area and 2% in the Victorian rural and regional area will be from a culturally and linguistically diverse background (Howe 2006). In some local government areas that figure is already between 50% and 60%.
6. In response to the draft document *Developing the Brimbank Learning Strategy Discussion Paper November 2009*, ECCV recommends an overlay of cultural competency strategies and considerations especially regarding the promotion of learning, access, participation and community engagement for ethnic seniors.
7. ECCV recommends the following diversity considerations for Brimbank project:

- a. Recognition of the 'specialised expertise' of staff in ethnic and multicultural welfare and community-based organisations, in relation to the delivery of culturally competent aged care services. This relates specifically to their capacity to provide cultural competency briefings, advice and workshops; advice on cultural backgrounds and perceptions; practical translation advice and guidelines; and advice to local councils on support for their culturally diverse residents.
- b. A focus on improving the cultural competency and sensitivity of service providers who have contact with non-English speaking seniors and older people with cultural preferences.
- c. Suggestions for developing flexible partnership models of service delivery with ethnic and multicultural community-based organisations to meet the needs of diverse older people.
- d. The importance of focusing on existing Health and Community Care (HACC) social support programs especially Planned Activity Groups (PAGs), as a crucial access point to aged care and other relevant information for older people with culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- e. Building on existing HACC PAGs for culturally specific groups to engage seniors with culturally diverse backgrounds in learning projects
- f. Building on the CALD (culturally and linguistically diverse) Senior Surfers Project at Vicnet that assists ethnic seniors in learning about the Internet, email, Skype, messaging, You Tube, online radio and podcasts.
- g. Building on the concept of person-centred aged care and the Department of Health HACC Active Service Model that encourages seniors to live at home longer and with healthy lifestyle options and customised support.
- h. A focus on easy access to interpreters and translations for non-English speaking seniors.
- i. The inclusion of the ECCV *Multicultural Aged Care Services Directory 2009* as a diversity resource for service providers to access networks and partnerships with ethnic and multicultural community service organisations.
- j. The importance of providing ethnic seniors with cultural and language specific groups for learning projects.

For further information contact Dr Irene Bouzo, Policy Officer Aged Care  
ph 9349 4122 and email [ibouzo@eccv.org.au](mailto:ibouzo@eccv.org.au)