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***ECCV RESPONSE TO THE
HOME AND COMMUNITY CARE ASSESSMENT
SERVICES (HAS) AND AGED CARE ASSESSMENT
SERVICES (ACAS) DRAFT PROTOCOL:
'STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS'
TO THE
AGED CARE BRANCH, DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
May 2010***

Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria (ECCV) welcomes the opportunity to present this response to the ACAS/HAS Protocol V4 March 2010 of the Department of Health.

ECCV is the state-wide peak advocacy body representing ethno-specific agencies and multicultural organisations.

ECCV advocates all levels of government on a range of areas including aged care for culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

ECCV convenes an Aged Care Policy Committee with broad representation from ethnic and multicultural community organisations and peak bodies with an interest in ethnic aged care. That committee provides feedback on gaps in ethnic aged care services delivery with a view to improve access for culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) seniors and increase the cultural responsiveness of services.

ECCV coordinates eight CALD Supported Access Pilot (SAP) Projects for seniors in a tripartite relationship with the Department of Health and the Municipal Associations of Victoria.

ECCV applauds the Victorian Government's approach to improving communication and cooperation between the HAS and ACAS staff.

ECCV supports the objectives and strategies in the Draft ACAS/HAS Protocol V4 in order to provide a seamless continuum of care for CALD seniors.

ECCV appreciates the opportunity to provide suggestions that focus on further strategies for improved access and culturally responsive interventions for CALD seniors with a view to providing them with better health and streamlined referrals to aged care services.

Background

Cultural diversity in Victoria's ageing population is a reality that will persist into the coming decades. By 2011 40% of people over 65 in Melbourne will be from culturally diverse backgrounds. That figure

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exceeds 50% in some Local Government Areas of metropolitan Melbourne. By 2011 one in five people over 80 will have an ethnic background, increasing to one in four by 2026.

Evidence-based research indicates that seniors from CALD backgrounds are living at home longer than the average population.

Feedback from ECCV stakeholders shows that many ethnic seniors, their families and carers access aged care services when they reach a crisis rather than seeking early intervention services.

ECCV's evidence-based research (Radermacher et al 2008) indicated that CALD seniors, families and carers have a preference for ethno-specific aged care services.

In reference to the ACAS/HAS Draft Protocol V4, ECCV's suggestions focus on:

- ◆ Streamlining pathways for CALD clients
- ◆ Strengthening partnerships with CALD agencies
- ◆ Improving secondary consultation practices with CALD agencies

ECCV's comments on specific sections in the draft protocol are as follows:

RE: 3.3 Diversity Framework

ECCV welcomes the improved 'planning for diversity' in the Victorian HACC Program through the development of the HACC Diversity Framework.

RE: 3.4 Living at Home Assessment

ECCV recommends that the Assessment Services' role in care coordination broadens its focus on client and care needs to include a family-focussed perspective. A client-centred, family-focussed approach aligns with older CALD people's values that often give prominence to relationships and connectedness over their individual needs.

RE: 3.5 Principles

ECCV welcomes the partnership approach and recommends the specific inclusion in the subsequent sections of the protocol of partnerships with CALD agencies.

RE: 4.2 Referral pathways for people already receiving HACC Services

In order to streamline CALD client pathways and to include hard-to-reach ethnic clients that need to build up trust with the aged care services, ECCV recommends that ACAS and HAS staff acknowledge the role of HACC (Home and Community Care) ethno-specific social support programs such as Planned Activity Groups (PAGs) as important aged care service access points. PAGs provide vital information and referrals to aged care services for many CALD

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seniors who refuse such often much-needed, early intervention aged care provision.

ECCV recommends increased collaboration between Assessment Services staff and ethnic and multicultural agencies to ensure early intervention and culturally responsive referral pathways for CALD clients and encourage CALD seniors to follow through with assessments and service provision.

ECCV receives community feedback that many CALD seniors avoid accessing aged care services until they reach a crisis point due to non-alignment of their cultural values with professional services.

ECCV recommends that particular attention be focussed on communication between ACAS and HAS staff regarding the special needs of CALD background clients to ensure they receive appropriate aged care support and culturally responsive services.

RE: 5 Referral processes and procedures

5.1 Making effective referrals

ECCV supports the notion that agencies need to trust the information received in referrals. Supported Access Pilot (SAP) Project workers and many CALD aged care workers conduct initial needs identification with a high proportion of CALD seniors in the community. It is therefore crucial that Assessment Services staff understand the role of Supported Access. ECCV would like to see HAS and ACAS staff develop relationships with the SAP workers and work together effectively in order to better recognise which CALD clients would benefit from joint visits and on-going SAP support in the assessment and care planning processes.

ECCV recommends that HAS and ACAS staff include ethnic and multicultural agencies as an additional, sometimes original and crucial, source of information and referral for some CALD clients even when they appear to come through GPs and health services. Such ethnic services sources are vital in the provision of an on-going partnership role in care coordination.

RE: Referrals form HAS to ACAS

5.2.1 Prior to making the referral

ECCV applauds the reference in this section to the role of the Supported Access worker in relation to CALD clients. ECCV recommends a clarification of the collaborative role of the SAPP workers and assessment staff to include sharing of SCTT information and joint visits. ECCV suggests an addition to the comment that SAPP workers 'can provide assistance in the assessment process.' Further elaboration should include the following comment: 'through sharing information and being present at the assessment to assist with decision-making and empowerment of the CALD client.'

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RE: 5.3 Referrals from ACAS to HAS

5.3.1 Information sharing and SCTT tools

In order to streamline assessment and implant the active service model, ECCV would like to see a proactive approach to the CALD client's cultural and linguistic preferences. ECCV, therefore, suggests the inclusion of 'cultural, linguistic and spiritual preferences of the client' as one of the dot points regarding the sharing of assessment information.

RE: 6 Assessment and care planning – opportunities for collaboration

6.1 Joint visits and assessments

ECCV welcomes the reference to joint assessment and joint visits in situations involving special needs clients, in particular CALD clients.

In order to further improve the CALD client's assessment experience ECCV suggests specific reference in this section to joint visits with SAPP workers, CALD aged care workers and other staff from ethnic and multicultural organisations.

RE: 6.3 Secondary consultations

Inter-agency collaboration between ethnic and multicultural organisations and assessment staff is vital for the secondary consults to be effective.

ECCV has received community feedback that CALD seniors in particular benefit from secondary consultations that involve joint visits and reviews in collaboration with trusted ethnic aged care workers, ethnic advocates and SAPP workers. ECCV suggests a proactive strategy of including specific comments in this section regarding such activities.

RE: Strengthening trust and building relationships

8.2 Assessment Alliances and PCP network

ECCV points out that an extensive network of ethnic and multicultural agencies exists such as the HACC CALD networks in various metro areas and other HACC state-wide networks. In addition community consultations suggest that ethnic agencies are not well-represented in existing Assessment Alliances and PCP committees.

ECCV recommends a reference in this section to direct HAS leaders to develop alliances, beyond PCPs, with existing CALD networks. This would assist achieving the aims listed in the Diversity Framework in section 3.3 of the protocol. For example the development of such ethnic alliances would:

- ◆ Improve information sharing about the diversity of seniors in particular catchments
- ◆ Assist with understanding implications of the diverse needs of CALD seniors
- ◆ Increase opportunities for suitable cultural responses.

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RE: 8.2.1 Information sharing

ECCV has produced a useful resource that includes contact details of ethnic welfare and community services agencies as well as a comprehensive listing of migrant resource centres in Victoria. ECCV suggests including, at the end of this section, the following CALD resource information:

- ◆ *ECCV Multicultural Aged Care Services Directory* – order form accessible at www.eccv.org.au

RE: 9 Further opportunities

ECCV conducts regular meetings and occasional Professional Development activities for managers and workers in the Supported Access Pilot Project. ECCV raises for consideration, the possibility of accessing this network for the purposes of engaging HAS and ACAS staff with CALD agency aged care workers and SAPP personnel.

Concluding comment

Overall ECCV encourages the consideration of these suggestions for inclusion in the Draft Protocol in order to improve the streamlining of client pathways, improve culturally responsive assessment and care coordination; and strengthen partnerships with the ethnic and multicultural sector.

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