



## **ECCV Position Paper on Multiculturalism**

1. Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria (ECCV) promotes Victoria as a multicultural success story.

Victoria is one of the world's most culturally and linguistically diverse communities with over 40 percent of Victorians born overseas or having at least one parent born overseas.

2. ECCV was founded in 1974 to provide multicultural sector leadership and advocacy, and has played a key role in shaping multicultural Australia.

ECCV has a mission to celebrate our multicultural history, multicultural achievements and to strengthen the responsiveness of policies and practices for Victoria's multicultural population.

3. ECCV believes Victoria's social, cultural and economic life has been invigorated by successive waves of immigration and that cultural diversity has a positive influence on the community.
4. In the spirit of everyday reconciliation ECCV recognises that Australia's First Peoples have a specific status, rights and needs as the Indigenous Community. ECCV regularly acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land at formal events and displays the Aboriginal Flag at the entrance of our office.

Furthermore ECCV supports initiatives that foster the recognition of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) peoples in Australia's Constitution.

5. ECCV acknowledges that multiculturalism, introduced as Australian Government policy in 1972, is not always well understood and has been perceived differently by different groups in society.

ECCV is pleased to affirm that multiculturalism has developed over four decades as a successful method of settling a wide variety of immigrants from non-English speaking backgrounds.

6. ECCV believes it is time to shift our focus from simple multicultural definitions about 'the right to maintain one's culture and identity' to how Australian policies, programs and services are better able to respond to cultural and linguistic diversity.
7. ECCV recognises that there is a growing awareness amongst organisations about the importance of developing cultural skills and tailoring services to respond to diversity.

ECCV is aware that people from non-English speaking backgrounds still experience inequalities and encourages service providers to meet the challenge of what multicultural means in terms of inclusive service provision.

8. ECCV recognises that 21st century multiculturalism in Australia must evolve in line with global migration trends, transnational identity formation, a sense of belonging and Human Rights.

ECCV believes that multiculturalism is not just about a society with a mix of cultures, but more importantly it should be seen as a mix of culturally different people who talk, work and live together, sharing common human rights and responsibilities in the maintenance of a cohesive and prosperous Australia.

9. At the State level ECCV strongly supports the Multicultural Victoria Act 2004 and the Multicultural Victoria Bill 2011, and especially the reporting requirements on language services and multicultural affairs.
10. At the Federal level ECCV welcomes Australia's Multicultural Policy 2011 *The People of Australia* that affirms Australia's unwavering commitment to a multicultural nation.
11. In relation to service provision ECCV welcomes the Australian Government's *Access and Equity Strategy and Framework (2008-10)* with its fundamental commitment to a strong multicultural policy.

ECCV acknowledges the on-going need to work in partnership across not-for-profit organisations, government service providers and peak bodies to promote earlier access to services and equity for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, especially in areas such as education, employment, health, aged care, as well as safety and security.

12. ECCV acknowledges the benefits and potential that multiculturalism brings and is pleased to see popular support for the richness offered by cultural diversity in Victoria's diverse arts culture and our café lifestyle.
13. ECCV is keen to shift the debates on immigration and settlement issues to the broader view that multiculturalism benefits all Australians by sustaining social harmony and advancing nation building.
14. ECCV welcomes opportunities to enhance respect and support for cultural, religious and linguistic diversity and is pleased to celebrate our multiculturalism via *Harmony Day* with all Australians and *Cultural Diversity Week* with other Victorians.

Source documents: *The People of Australia, Australia's Multicultural Policy 2011*; Victorian Multicultural Act 2004; *Access and Equity in Government Services Report 2008-2010*, Australian Government; *Giving Voice: A History of Multicultural Arts Victoria, 2011* Multicultural Arts Victoria; *Many Hopes, One Dream: the Story of the Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria 2009*, ECCV; Clyne & Jupp eds 2011 *Multiculturalism and Integration: A Harmonious Relationship*; Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) 2006.