



**ECCV SUBMISSION TO THE PALLIATIVE CARE IN VICTORIA STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS 2010-2015 OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
January 2010**

Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria (ECCV) welcomes the opportunity to present a submission to the Department of Health in response to the document Palliative Care in Victoria Strategic Directions 2010-2015.

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 applauds the Victorian Government's evaluation of the *Strengthening Palliative Care Policy* (SPCP) and appreciates the opportunity to provide input to the strategic directions in palliative care on behalf of culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) seniors as well as ethnic and multicultural community-based service organisations.

ECCV strongly supports priority number 5 in the new directives to "undertake more specific engagement with CALD communities" and offers practical suggestions for addressing that priority in this submission.

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 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 ethnic seniors, their families and carers have limited or no understanding of the concept of palliative care and Advance Care Planning. In addition, there is scarce information about palliative care services in languages other than English. Victoria's CALD seniors have a wide range of spiritual and cultural beliefs and practices related to end of life stages.

In relation to caring at home, the *Who Cares? Australian Government Inquiry 2008* raised the common concern that a group of 'hidden' or unidentified ethnic family carers exists especially in culturally and linguistically diverse communities. As a consequence informal CALD carers are unlikely to search for, or even know about, services that meet their needs. In addition, evidence-based research (Feldman et al 2008) indicated that CALD seniors, families and carers have a preference for ethno-specific aged care services.

Response to priority areas as identified by the SPCP evaluation

ECCV advocates the facilitation of closer alliances between palliative care providers and the multicultural aged care sector. The following recommendations that expand several of the priorities identified by the SPCP evaluation and provide a culturally diverse framework.

Priority #3 Re Equity and Access

1. ECCV recommends that equity of access to palliative care services for CALD seniors requires more culturally responsive programs and services. ECCV calls on the Department of Health to promote and facilitate, more widely, the need for the culturally diverse briefings of staff in palliative care providers and residential aged care facilities.

Priority #4 Re Workforce Gaps

2. ECCV recommends increased promotion of training and recruitment of bilingual and bicultural aged care and health sector workers with expertise in palliative care.

Priority #5 Re Engagement with CALD Communities

3. In order to undertake more specific engagement with CALD communities, ECCV recommends that the Department of Health promotes to the health sector the notion that many of Victoria's ethnic and multicultural community-based organisations provide a specialist service, namely a highly developed expertise in cultural briefings, advice on language services and translations, and cultural competency models for generic organisations.
4. In order to further facilitate more specific engagement with CALD communities, ECCV has produced the *Multicultural Aged Care Services Directory 2009* available for order on the website www.eccv.org.au. The directory provides contact details of ethno-specific residential aged care facilities, as well as ethnic and multicultural aged care service providers throughout Victoria. ECCV calls for the extensive promotion of this resource in the health and palliative care sector.

Priority #6 Re Palliative Care Education of Service Providers

5. ECCV recommends that palliative care education targeted at generalist service providers be combined with a culturally competent framework that acknowledges diverse spiritual and cultural practices.

Priority #8 Re Palliative Care Awareness Raising in the Broader Community

6. Currently government departments rely on Primary Care Partnerships (PCPs) as an extensive community network for community health promotion. ECCV points out that according to the ECCV Aged Care Policy Committee, the PCPs do not adequately represent Victoria's ethnic networks.
7. ECCV advocates that health and palliative care promotion to the CALD community be specifically targeted through existing ethnic networks and multicultural community-based organisations.
8. ECCV recommends that Ethnic Radio is an effective and efficient avenue for health and palliative care promotion to CALD seniors.
9. ECCV recommends that the Victorian Government facilitate the production of bilingual and bicultural palliative care information to CALD seniors in order to overcome English language barriers.
10. ECCV recommends the dissemination of translated palliative care information such as fact sheets via websites frequently accessed by ethnic aged care service providers.

Priority #10 Re Bereavement Support

11. ECCV calls on the Victorian Government to facilitate and promote increased information to palliative care service providers regarding bereavement practices that reflect the spiritual and cultural diversity of CALD communities and to ensure culturally competent policy development.

Priority #12 Re Advanced Care Planning (ACP)

12. ECCV calls for the Victorian Government to facilitate the promotion and community education of spiritually and culturally responsive ACP to CALD communities and that it reflects sensitivity to diverse attitudes to caring for the dying, decisions about medical treatment as well as specific spiritual beliefs and practices.
13. ECCV recommends that progressive translation of ACP information in languages other than English that reflect the uneven mosaic of ageing multicultural communities and dissemination via relevant websites.
14. Overall ECCV encourages strategic alliances and cooperation between palliative care stakeholders and the multicultural aged care sector to ensure that all Victorian seniors receive culturally and spiritually responsive quality palliative care.

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