



FACT SHEET

Employment Issues Facing CALD Communities

- Employment is a cornerstone issue for Australia's culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities, as employment is intertwined with not only financial stability but also social cohesion, self-esteem, independence, the ability to gain stable housing, opportunities to build and maintain English language skills, greater systems knowledge and, overall, a greater sense of community belonging and well-being.
- By the same token, unemployment and underemployment have serious negative consequences for CALD individuals, communities, and Australia overall. Unemployment and underemployment can lead to social isolation, exclusion, mental health issues, the creation of ethnic enclaves, higher school drop-out rates for CALD youth, higher rates of incarceration, and lower overall health outcomes, all of which inhibit social cohesion.
- Language barriers, low literacy, pre-migration trauma, lack of recognition of overseas qualifications, lack of transport options, discrimination and racism, lack of local work experience and referees, insufficient or fragmented support from employment services, gender expectations, and limited awareness of the employment system and Australian workplace cultures constitute key employment barriers for many CALD individuals.
- Job seekers from New and Emerging Communities as well as older migrants, women, youth, and people with disability each experience distinct issues, vulnerabilities, and intersectional disadvantages when it comes to gaining stable employment, all of which must be actively addressed through culturally and linguistically appropriate measures to engender higher access and equity in employment across Australia.
- CALD women often face gender-specific barriers to employment, including limited opportunities to gain drivers licenses, traditional cultural expectations of women as domestic caregivers, childcare and community care responsibilities that inhibit employment opportunities, and, in some cases, lack of prior employment history or experiences.

- Older migrants may be disproportionately affected by low English language or digital literacy levels, lack of Australian recognition of overseas qualifications, insecure work situations, and lack of upskilling opportunities.
- Lack of cultural competency in mainstream services, the under-resourcing of ethno-specific employment services, discrimination throughout the employment sector and limited access to language and employment training options for new and older migrants in Australia all coalesce to create systemic unemployment and underemployment for CALD individuals.
- Rural and regional areas of Australia frequently report the need for more culturally and linguistically appropriate employment services for CALD job seekers, particularly in areas of high CALD or NEC settlement. It is imperative that settlement services be established, supported, and resourced in all areas where CALD settlement occurs, both urban and rural, in order to support not only CALD employment in such areas but social cohesion for the community overall.
- FECCA's national Access and Equity consultations as well as recent national research into CALD employment, such as that published by Graeme Hugo, The Brotherhood of St Laurence, the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, and the National Employment Services Association, have all identified the need for such widespread change as more skills recognition for migrants, higher valuing of bicultural and bilingual skills across all employment sectors, dedicated efforts to limit discrimination and racism in hiring practices, and an emphasis on upskilling for CALD job seekers. These efforts will help decrease the gaps in employment outcomes currently experienced by CALD job seekers.
- FECCA advocates for consistent, targeted, and culturally and linguistically appropriate employment support for CALD job seekers as well as recognition of and efforts to address the distinct barriers faced by different CALD communities and groups.
- By actively working to close the gaps in employment opportunities and outcomes between CALD and non-CALD job seekers and workers, we can all assist in creating equality and social cohesion for all Australians.