A report by the Federation of Ethnic Communities’ Councils of Australia to the Department of Immigration and Citizenship around access and equity issues for Australians from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds accessing Australian Government services.

August 2008
## Contents

**FECCA 2008 ACCESS AND EQUITY REPORT**

### Contents

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY ................................................................. 2

2. CALD AGED CARE SERVICES: ACCESS AND EQUITY ISSUES FOR CALD COMMUNITIES ........... 7

   2.1 CALD Aged Care Services: Feedback from Consultations .................................................. 8

   2.1.1 CALD Aged Care Policy and Strategy ................................................................. 8

   2.1.2 CALD Aged Care Language Services .................................................................... 8

   2.1.3 CALD Residential Aged Care Standards .......................................................... 10

   2.1.4 CALD Aged Care Other Positive Government Initiatives .................................... 10

   2.1.5 CALD Aged Care: Importance of Ethno-Specific and Multicultural Agencies .......... 12

   2.1.6 CALD Aged Care: Regional .............................................................................. 13

   2.1.7 CALD Aged Care: General .............................................................................. 14

3. CENTRELINK: ACCESS AND EQUITY ISSUES FOR CALD COMMUNITIES ....................... 15

   3.1 Centrelink: Feedback from Consultations .................................................................... 16

   3.1.1 Centrelink: Language Services .............................................................................. 16

   3.1.2 Centrelink Multicultural Service Officers/Community Relations Initiatives .......... 17

   3.1.3 Need for Education around welfare payments ......................................................... 18

   3.1.4 Settlement Information ....................................................................................... 19

   3.1.5 Two Year Waiting Period for Benefits: ................................................................. 19

   3.1.6 Centrelink: Interaction with Job Network ........................................................... 20

   3.1.7 Customer OnLine Services .................................................................................. 21

   3.1.8 Other .............................................................................................................. 21

4. COMMONWEALTH FUNDED ENGLISH LANGUAGE TRAINING SERVICES .................. 22

   4.1 English Language Training Services: Feedback from Consultations .......................... 23
4.1.1 Adult Migrant Education Program (AMEP) ................................................................. 23
4.1.2 Language Literacy and Numeracy Program ............................................................... 25
4.1.3 Secondary School Retention Rates (state administered but part federally funded) ..... 25

5. YOUTH SERVICES: ACCESS AND EQUITY ISSUES FOR CALD YOUTH ................. 26
5.1 Youth Services: Feedback from Consultations ........................................................... 27
5.1.1 Policy ...................................................................................................................... 27
5.1.2 Sector Funding and Staffing .................................................................................. 28
5.1.3 Cultural Awareness ............................................................................................... 28
5.1.4 Housing ................................................................................................................ 29
5.1.5 Family Support .................................................................................................... 30
5.1.6 Education, Training and Employment ................................................................. 32
5.1.7 Justice .................................................................................................................. 33

6.0 WOMEN’S SERVICES: ACCESS AND EQUITY FOR CALD WOMEN .................. 34
6.1 Judiciary and Family Law ....................................................................................... 35
6.2 Financial Literacy .................................................................................................... 36
6.3 Workforce Participation .......................................................................................... 37
6.3.1 Overseas Qualifications ..................................................................................... 37
6.3.2 Job Capacity Assessments .................................................................................. 37
6.4 Child Care Service Provision .................................................................................. 38
6.5 Interpreter Services ............................................................................................... 38
6.6 CALD Women with Disability ............................................................................... 38
6.7 Programmes ........................................................................................................... 39
6.7.1 Family Relationships Services ........................................................................... 39
6.7.2 Women’s Leadership and Development Programme ........................................ 39
6.7.3 Support for Victims of People Trafficking Programme ....................................... 40
1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Federation of Ethnic Communities Council’s of Australia (FECCA) reports annually to the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) on access and equity issues for culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities and their use of Commonwealth Government funded services.

FECCA is the national peak body of CALD and multicultural communities in Australia. FECCA advocates for equitable access to services and recognition of Australians from CALD backgrounds. FECCA’s access and equity reports are a key component of FECCA’s work to improve service delivery and outcomes for CALD communities in Australia.

FECCA’s access and equity reports help inform the Government’s policy development and implementation of its Accessible Government Services for All framework. The report also seeks to help monitor Commonwealth Government programs and agencies’ response to DIAC’s Charter of Public Service in a Culturally Diverse Society which includes as a principle that:

Government services should be available to everyone who is entitled to them and should be free from any form of discrimination irrespective of a person’s country of birth, language, culture, race or religion (p.3, DIAC, 1998).

In its 2006-08 Access and Equity Report FECCA has drawn on consultations with key stakeholders over the last two years to align with DIAC’s planned 2008 reporting period profile. The 2006-08 report also has an enhanced focus on CALD older people, humanitarian entrants, CALD women and CALD younger people. The report considers closely the particular work of Federal Government agencies and/or programs in meeting the needs of CALD people. These include:

- Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing funded aged care services;
- Centrelink;
- Commonwealth funded English language training services; and
- Commonwealth funded youth services.

FECCA’s consultations continue to show the need for on-going effort in providing accessible and equitable services to CALD communities. While some agencies are taking CALD access and equity issues seriously, embedding more deeply and systematically the principles outlined in the Charter of Public Service in a Culturally Diverse Society across all Commonwealth government funded services remains a priority.
Particular themes to emerge during the consultation were:

- The need to recognise the immediate and significant settlement challenges of new humanitarian entrants and allow for greater flexibility in program design, delivery and policies during their early settlement years, so as not to unduly and/or unfairly restrict access to services and benefits.

- The need to support older CALD people who may be reverting to their original languages and suffering isolation, through culturally effective aged care services that are accessible and responsive to their needs.

FECCA welcomes any feedback on this report.
2. CALD AGED CARE SERVICES: ACCESS AND EQUITY ISSUES FOR CALD COMMUNITIES

The Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing (DOHA) provides funding for aged care services including residential and community care services for frail, older people. These services are delivered by private, not-for-profit, state and local government providers under Commonwealth funding, legislation and guidelines which include the Aged Care Act 1997. DOHA administers funding of around $8 billion in this area, including around $25 million for strategies in culturally appropriate care.

The findings in this section relates to DOHA Outcome 4 (which includes outcome 4.5 which relates to culturally appropriate care):

**DOHA OUTCOME 4**

Older Australians enjoy independence, good health and wellbeing. High quality, cost-effective care is accessible to frail older people, and their carers are supported

(DOHA Annual Report 2006-07)

Aged Care is becoming an increasingly important issue for CALD people in Australia as our post-war migrant population ages. By 2011 it is predicted that around 23 per cent of Australians aged over 65, around one million people, will be from a culturally and linguistically diverse background. This figure is expected to increase to 30 per cent by 2021.¹

Older CALD people generally have lower levels of English language proficiency which can limit their access to and understanding of aged care services. Reports have found that CALD older people may experience neglect, isolation, anger and withdrawal as a result of inappropriate care.²

One recent report found that there were five main barriers to aged care services by CALD people: lack of English proficiency; limited access to information; lack of knowledge about aged care services; intergenerational issues; and communication.³

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¹ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare projections.


³
The main feedback to emerge from consultations included:

- The need for a contemporary and detailed overarching policy framework addressing the provision of aged care services to the increasingly large number of CALD older people.
- Concerns around the underutilisation of language services in aged care.
- The need for greater monitoring and enforcing of existing culturally appropriate care standards under aged care legislation and the need to ensure that general aged care standards are being applied equitably to CALD populations.
- Statements that ethno-specific and multicultural service agencies needed greater support to improve access levels to aged care services for CALD communities and mainstream agencies need continued support and dedicated, or increased, funding to improve services to CALD communities.

2.1 CALD Aged Care Services: Feedback from Consultations

The following summarises generally specific feedback from key stakeholders received by FECCA during the access and equity consultations. Where possible this feedback is grouped thematically.

2.1.1 CALD Aged Care Policy and Strategy

- Concern over the lack of a CALD older people’s aged care strategy and policy to drive best practice in this area. The last such initiative was The Ethnic Older Persons Strategy produced by the then Commonwealth Department of Human Services and Health in 1995.

2.1.2 CALD Aged Care Language Services

- There is no targeted funding for language services in residential aged care or firm policies in place to ensure that language services are provided using core funding - therefore, language services are often neglected, unlike in home and community care (HACC) where language services are more widely utilised as HACC often has dedicated language services funding.

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• As such, there is wide concern over the lack of proper utilisation of available translation and interpreting services by many aged care providers. For instance, it has been reported that the large Victorian interpreting provider VITS received only four requests for interpreting from almost 800 residential aged care facilities in Victoria during 2006-07.\(^4\) There is a need for significant improvement in this area.

• One elderly man in another consultation stated, “at the meeting in the nursing home no professional interpreter was present, so my daughter was used as an interpreter. It was humiliating to talk about private issues in front of her”.\(^5\)

• The need has also been identified to increase the availability of bilingual aged care staff including appropriate funding and workforce development policies and strategies to facilitate this.

• Concerns have been expressed by communities that access to accessible (including translated) information remains a huge challenge given the complexities of the aged care system. It was thought that ethno-specific and multicultural agencies have great capacity in this area.

• One respondent stated CALD older people wanted to hear more about aged care services through community language radio and through presentations and seminars in community languages.

• It was felt by one respondent that Centrelink’s *Seniors News*, which is translated into many languages on a regular basis, is a good model for a similar publication that could deal with aged care information provision to people from non-English speaking backgrounds. Centrelink was noted during consultations with one agency as having superior information services to CALD communities.

• It was appreciated that the *Charter of Residents’ Rights and Responsibilities* (which includes cultural, religious and language rights) has been translated into 17 community languages and is available on line, although it has been noted that the Commonwealth Ombudsman translates into 36 languages compared to DOHA’s 17.

\(^4\) Elizabeth Drozd, CEO, Australian Polish Community Services, Melbourne, Victoria, Consultation August 2008.

\(^5\) Klaudia Vainshtein, op. cit.
2.1.3 CALD Residential Aged Care Standards

- While Outcome 3.8 of the Aged Care Accreditation Standards states that, ‘individual interests, customs, beliefs and cultural and ethnic backgrounds are valued and fostered’, a concern was expressed that monitoring of this standard by the regulator is not overly rigorous and that providers may simply state, for instance, that they recognise cultural diversity without providing evidence of what measures they take to do so. This standard is one of a larger number of subsets of four larger themes and as such is not overly prominent in a regulatory sense.

- With the larger suite of other standards it was felt that more attention should be paid to how effectively those standards are being delivered to CALD residents with language and/or cultural differences.

- It was reported that for Community Aged Care Packages (CAPS) (at home residential aged care) take up rates by CALD older people were much higher than CALD take up rates in standard residential aged care because CAPS has firm regulatory standards around ensuring the client base represents the community. It was felt that residential aged care providers should have to meet similar standards to ensure CALD people used their facilities.

- Several agencies consulted, such as the aged care providers’ peak body, Aged and Community Services Australia, have called for a dedicated pool of funding for residential aged care providers to meet the needs of CALD clients in language service provision, etc. This was also recommended by the influential Hogan Report into residential aged care services.

2.1.4 CALD Aged Care Other Positive Government Initiatives

- Appreciation by the CALD sector of funding being allocated by DoHA to 35 CALD projects nationally under the Community Partners Program and eight projects nationwide being supported under the Partners in Culturally Appropriate Care Program. It was, however, noted that funding for these programs is often provided under one year agreements which make long term planning and staff retention difficult. Two to three years are considered more appropriate agreement periods for effective service delivery.

- DoHA also stated during consultations that in 2006-07, 72 projects were funded under the Community Partners Program. This was the result of a 100 per cent increase in funding for the program.
• DOHA stated that in 2008-09 71 projects have been funded under the CPP. This has included 42 projects with a regional or rural focus. The program has also focused quite significantly on new and emerging communities, with for example, projects targeting over 40 different nationalities and numerous language groups.

• DOHA stated that these smaller, less well established communities can be supported through a mentoring program under the Community Partners Program where a larger, or more established organisation will receive funding to support these smaller organisations with administrative support and expertise. There are ten communities benefiting from mentoring arrangements in 2008-09.

• The Department also stated they provide funding under the Community Partners Program for translations in lesser used languages. Funding is also provided to the Centre for Cultural Diversity to support access to translated materials available on the Centre’s website. In addition, the website also houses two other innovative projects: the On-line Residents Handbook and the Glossary of Aged Care Terminology.

• Multicultural sector consultations found that there was general appreciation that DOHA is funding ethno-specific and multicultural agencies to help deliver culturally appropriate aged care services through the Community Partners Program, that DOHA has recognised certain communities as warranting priority access and also that DOHA is funding the Centre for Cultural Diversity in Ageing to help meet the aged care needs of older Australians from CALD backgrounds.

• There was also appreciation by the CALD sector that DOHA is funding multicultural and ethno-specific agencies to deliver residential aged care services, but concern over the lack of growth funding for many multicultural and ethno-specific agencies delivering specialised aged care services to older CALD communities, despite these communities experiencing significant population growth.

• The Commonwealth funded Centre for Cultural Diversity in Ageing has an excellent website with useful information and resources for aged care providers, including a brochure called ‘Options in Aged Care’ which is translated into many languages and has been very well received by the sector.
There is also an On-line Resident Handbook that enables residential aged care providers to easily compile and publish these handbooks in sixteen community languages and thereby supply residents and their families with essential information in their preferred language. The Handbook is available for download free of charge.

There is also a Glossary of Aged Care Terms for translation of aged care related material, also housed on the website, and the aged care industry has access to over one thousand aged care terms with agreed translations in sixteen community languages. The Glossary was developed in conjunction with the Australian Institute of Interpreters and Translators (AUSIT) and was subject to a quality assurance process that involved focus group testing of the translations by two translators for each language acting independently of each other.

The Royal District Nursing Service (which is HACC funded) is developing Webster Packs (Drug medication kits) translated into community languages.

Positive feedback was received regarding the government targeting ethnic communities with low take-up rates during the Aged Care Approvals Rounds (ACAR), which allocates funding for residential aged care beds to providers. For instance, in western areas of Melbourne, Victoria, a recent ACAR round targeted groups including Cantonese, German, Hungarian, Maltese, Polish and Russian and any smaller and emerging community with poor access to existing services.

In 2006 the Association for Services to Torture and Trauma Services (ASeTTS) entered into a partnership to develop a project to provide information, training and consultancy to aged care providers and health professionals about working across cultures, and recognising and managing symptoms of trauma in their clients. Together with a reference group from aged care services, a pilot training package was developed and delivered to aged care practitioners and allied health professionals in Perth and WA regional centres. The successful pilot is now being rolled out nationally with DOHA support.

2.1.5 CALD Aged Care: Importance of Ethno-Specific and Multicultural Agencies

It was noted that CALD older people were often more likely to take up services when they were provide in an ethno-specific service environment, such is the case for social support HACC
services in Victoria, which are provided along ethno-specific grounds, and have higher than average take-up rates with CALD communities.

- Concerns that larger ethno-specific and multicultural agencies, who are providing quality Commonwealth funded residential aged care services, are being prevented from providing part-Commonwealth funded basic home and community care (HACC) aged care services in jurisdictions like New South Wales and Victoria, due to exclusive service delivery arrangements with local government and other mainstream organisations, which is organised at the state government level.

- Concerns that smaller ageing communities, such as the Hungarian-Australian or Turkish-Australian communities, do not have access to ethno-specific service providers, as do the larger older communities like the Italian-, Greek-, Dutch- and Polish-Australian communities.

- Concerns also that new and emerging communities do not have access to properly constituted and funded ethno-specific agencies that may assist in helping them access aged care services.

2.1.6 CALD Aged Care: Regional

- Continuing concerns that CALD older people in regional areas where they are more thinly dispersed are missing out on culturally competent service delivery because of a general lack of understanding in these areas of how to deal with CALD clients. For instance, feedback from the Multicultural Council of Northern Territory stated:

`... there are no ethno-specific aged care facilities or clustering of CALD communities of interest within mainstream institutions. The current situation of the lack of culturally-specific CALD seniors’ accommodation will not change dramatically in the near future because of the numerically low numbers of the various CALD communities. In addition, there is a lack of availability of cultural competency and commitment by staff to ensuring that the special needs of CALD communities are identified and addressed'.

This respondent did however acknowledge the good work of the Commonwealth funded Partners in Culturally Appropriate Care and Community Partners Programs in the Northern Territory in helping to address these issues.
2.1.7 CALD Aged Care: General

- Identification of the need for health prevention programs, such as falls prevention, diabetes and healthy living programs to be more systematically targeted towards CALD older people.

- One respondent stated they had undertaken research which showed that CALD older people and their families were most likely to find out about aged care from Centrelink, which indicated there is no effective stand-alone aged care information provider for CALD communities funded out of the DOHA ageing and aged care area.

- Concern that the level of funding provided for services such as respite, volunteer aged care visitation, and community aged care packages (CAPS) simply do not meet the huge demand in this area from the larger CALD older communities, such as the older Italian-Australian and the older Greek-Australian communities.

- Concerns were raised that New South Wales studies reported low take-up of dementia services by CALD communities. It was felt that greater cultural competency during assessment stages and brokerage models with ethno-specific and multicultural service providers may assist in this area.

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6 NSW Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care, CALD Dementia Strategic Model, NSW, 2008.
3. CENTRELINK: ACCESS AND EQUITY ISSUES FOR CALD COMMUNITIES

The Commonwealth Department of Human Services is responsible for Centrelink which was established under the *Commonwealth Services Delivery Agency Act 1997*. Centrelink delivers a range of government payments and services for retirees, families, carers, parents, people with disabilities, people seeking work or studying, indigenous people and those from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds.

During the consultations, Centrelink was identified as a government agency that often exhibits best practice in meeting the needs of CALD communities. This is particularly pleasing as humanitarian entrants and refugees have a great deal of interaction with Centrelink during their initial settlement stage and migrants have much interaction with Centrelink over the longer term. For instance, full aged pensioners are twice as likely to be born overseas, with around 40 per cent of people on the full aged pension being born overseas.7

Centrelink was found to be one of the best Commonwealth agencies in terms of providing accessible and widely available information to CALD clients in a wide array of community languages and through various media.

The introduction of Multicultural Service Officers (MSO’s) at Centrelink is also playing an increasingly important role in strengthening CALD communities’ interactions and relations with Centrelink.

The provision of information on the availability, or otherwise, of Centrelink benefits early in the settlement period was identified as an area that needs continued attention. There was also a need identified for continued effort in sourcing available interpreters and translators in new and emerging languages.

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3.1 Centrelink: Feedback from Consultations

3.1.1 Centrelink: Language Services

- On the whole Centrelink is considered to be a leading Commonwealth agency in the provision of language services. The only issues to arise were around the availability of interpreters in newer language groups and issues around the complexity of information and Centrelink paperwork.

- Centrelink was identified as a consistent provider of free face-to-face interpreter services during meetings. Their national Multilingual Call service number 13 12 02 was identified as very helpful.

- However, concerns were expressed during the Western Australian consultations about an apparent trend towards telephone interpreting over face-to-face interpreting, which is considered superior when allowed by economies of scale.

- Centrelink’s *Seniors News* which is translated into 17 community languages is widely distributed and used by older CALD communities and their service providers to receive and disseminate information. This is seen as a very important resource demonstrating best practice in CALD service delivery.

- Centrelink’s user friendly website received positive feedback during the consultations. Centrelink’s website includes a section capturing all of the Centrelink translated material. Centrelink are considered to be well ahead of other agencies in this area with a large volume of translated material in many community languages.

- The Centrelink motto of *We Speak Your Language* is considered to be very important and positive in framing Centrelink’s bilingual interactions with Australia’s multicultural and non-English speaking background communities.

- In Darwin our consultations found that there are currently no Burmese/Karen interpreters to meet the demand from this community through agencies such as Centrelink. This issue seems to be related to the low English proficiency of people who speak these languages and thus the difficulty of sourcing accredited interpreters through the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI).

- It was reported that a significant number of individuals from new and emerging communities, especially women and older people, prefer verbal communication rather than written
communication, due to their limited reading skills in English, and also often in their first languages.

- Feedback during consultations also indicated that many of these clients expressed difficulties in understanding the very large amount of paperwork they are required to complete when interacting with Centrelink and other government agencies.
- Many of these clients need assistance to accurately fill in forms in order to avoid over or under payment of benefits.
- The terminology in Centrelink forms can prove difficult particularly in the early settlement periods as clients are not familiar with concepts such as estimated income for next year, income statement, taxable income, assets, etc. As such, basic explanatory material needs to be included in these forms and simple, non-complex language needs to be used wherever possible.
- Consultations also included reports that CALD community members often do not understand how easily debts and overpayments can occur and are not aware of ways to resolve these situations. In addition there is a general lack of understanding in the CALD community of the importance of notifying Centrelink of changes in their circumstances, such as around income. Continued effort is needed in this area.

3.1.2 Centrelink Multicultural Service Officers/Community Relations Initiatives

- The introduction of Multicultural Service Officers (MSOs) at Centrelink has forged strong links between Centrelink and CALD communities. The MSOs consult on a quarterly basis with local service providers, government agencies and community organisations.
- Centrelink’s Multicultural Advisory Committees also provide an effective forum to discuss issues of Centrelink policy and program delivery relevant to CALD communities. The scope of ethnic communities’ councils representation on these committees is greatly appreciated, highly effective and should be retained.

An individual issue of concern was noted in Victoria that there may have been plans to relocate the Mildura region MSO to Melbourne. This position has had a very positive effect on CALD-Centrelink relations in that region and CALD representatives in the region have called on the
position to remain regionally based.
Those consulted in South Australia also stated that the MSO advocacy and community relations role needed to be extended to also facilitating client services. This would involve a new tier of multicultural client services officers who can deal directly with non-English speaking clients with their daily inquiries. This would allow the MSOs to attend to advocacy and community relations and ensure that client services to CALD and NESB clients was delivered even more effectively. Centrelink could also develop more brokerage models with ethno-specific agencies and migrant resource centres to provide information on Centrelink and its services.
The ACT Multicultural Council reported that regular information sessions in the ACT where various government agencies such as Centrelink are invited to attend have been important for providing vital information to clients.

3.1.3 Need for Education around welfare payments

- Some respondents stated there was a need for further education and information around the purpose of welfare payments to prevent problems around family income and well being arising. For instance, some refugee families have had difficulties around managing their welfare payments which can lead to family break down. Some instances of family members monopolising payments or families sending large amounts of money home to the detriment of the health and welfare of the Australian family emerged during the consultations.

Case Study

_A refugee family in NSW started getting Centrelink payments after arrival. The husband took control of all the financial arrangements for the family. He did not inform the family where or how the money was to be used, and most of the times he sent it to his family members back home. Occasionally when the_
One day during a hospital visit the doctors informed the wife that their child was sick due to malnourishment. The doctor referred her to Centrelink case officers who addressed the problem by giving her rights to half the payments while the other half went to the husband.

- Many in the consultations, especially at migrant resource centres stated that they would like to see Centrelink include in initial information sessions with the migrant population:
  - Information on the purpose of Centrelink payments; and
  - The equality of women and men in Australian society.
- Greater information and education about the purposes of Centrelink payments and the need to ensure the payments were used equitably for the benefits of the whole Australian-based family may help ease some of these problems.

3.1.4 Settlement Information

- It was stated that Centrelink needs to work closely with other settlement organisations to ensure the on-going provision of comprehensive and well designed orientation and settlement programs for new arrivals. This should also include community education programs for the wider Australian community, which will help to build understanding and foster acceptance.

3.1.5 Two Year Waiting Period for Benefits:

- The two year waiting period for non humanitarian entrants to access welfare benefit payments was consistently raised as a key concern for CALD communities with regard to Centrelink services. While this is clear government policy, more could be done to inform CALD communities of this restriction prior to settlement so as to ensure new residents are fully aware of their rights and responsibilities.
This policy may exacerbate existing levels of disadvantage for some migrants and their sponsors, so again it is important this restriction is communicated clearly to new migrants and their sponsors.

Centrelink should therefore undertake an extensive education campaign to inform new permanent residents on the services they can or cannot access. This may reduce anxiety about restricted access to benefits and may also provide information on services that new migrants are able to access to ease their settlement process.

The ten year waiting period for benefits for child sponsored (parent category) visa holders, while again a government policy, created additional burdens in this area and is thought to be in breach of the basic human rights of the Australian citizens and permanent residents this rule applies to.

3.1.6 Centrelink: Interaction with Job Network

- It was felt that referrals of new migrants to Job Capacity Assessments (JCA) are done too early, and sometimes within two days of arrival in Australia.

- At this time many refugees are in the process of adjusting to immediate settlement challenges, such as learning English, obtaining long-term accommodation and addressing health issues and schooling for their children, etc.

- This unduly onerous JCA regime often forces some individuals to overlook other important appointments which overlap with these assessments.

- The employment needs of CALD communities are often not being adequately met by the mainstream Job Network providers.

- As a result many CALD community members, especially refugees, resort to finding employment through their own networks or through CALD Specialist employment providers who are not Job Network providers, such as state government funded workforce participation agencies.

- During the consultations, the general consensus was that multicultural and ethno-specific employment providers are not adequately represented within the Job Network. Many Job
Network agencies have a one size fits all approach that can be sometimes be inflexible and not meet the needs of CALD and other disadvantaged job seekers.

- There is concern by many clients and stakeholders in the Darwin area that some local Job Network providers do not appear to be committed to working productively with CALD communities to achieve employment outcomes, even with the prevalent skills shortage in the local economy.

3.1.7 Customer OnLine Services

- Centrelink’s Customer Online Services are acknowledged as very useful for computer literate and well educated people to transact their business with Centrelink.

- However, it was noted that many people from CALD backgrounds, particularly humanitarian entrants and older CALD people, do not have the language or computer skills to use Centrelink's Customer Online Services and prefer verbal or person-to-person interaction with Centrelink.

- Therefore, it is important that clients continue to have full choice in how they deal with Centrelink and that future service delivery models are not entirely focused on Customer Online Services, to ensure CALD people can still deal effectively with Centrelink.

3.1.8 Other

- The Western Australian consultation identified the need for further information about disaggregated CALD community take up rates in appealing and reviewing Centrelink decisions. It is believed that these are lower than mainstream communities but there is no disaggregated data to determine this.
4. COMMONWEALTH FUNDED ENGLISH LANGUAGE TRAINING SERVICES

The Commonwealth Government offers several programs for migrants and refugees to learn English to assist with their successful settlement in Australia.

The most prominent of these is the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) which provides basic tuition in the English language. This program is managed by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) and is currently being subject to an extensive review process.

The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations also administers a Language, Literacy and Numeracy Program (LLNP) which seeks to improve clients’ language, literacy and numeracy for the purposes of successful participation in the workforce and/or training programs. The LLNP program is for all eligible people with low levels of language and literacy proficiency, including migrants, disabled people, Indigenous Australians and other disadvantaged groups. Unlike AMEP, LLNP is not exclusively for migrants and refugees. The LLNP program is also being reviewed.

FECCA’s consultations received widespread acknowledgement of the importance of English language training and acquisition for new migrants and refugees. These programs were considered of critical importance in assisting with successful settlement outcomes for migrants and refugees. State schools (part federally funded) also were criticized for sometimes failing to deal adequately with students from refugee backgrounds, and particularly adolescents.

A key theme to emerge in the consultations was the need for greater flexibility in program design and delivery to allow for the vastly different educational backgrounds and language levels of clients, particularly with regards to the refugee cohort.

The general consensus during the consultation was that flexibility in the provision of English language programs is a vital component of making them relevant and accessible to migrant communities.

Program timetables should allow for the flexible participation of migrants who may face significant time pressures due to immediate settlement challenges.

Continued improvements in the delivery of these programs are necessary to improve successful English language acquisition and therefore reduce the social exclusion experienced by migrants from non-English speaking backgrounds.
The consultations below are augmented by consultations FECCA undertook in its formal and separate submissions to the current AMEP and LLNP program reviews being undertaken by the Commonwealth Government. FECCA welcomes these reviews by government as a positive step forward in continuing to improve these services and the outcomes they deliver for migrants and refugees.

4.1 English Language Training Services: Feedback from Consultations

4.1.1 Adult Migrant Education Program (AMEP)

- It was noted that many new migrants are missing AMEP classes provided at set times because they may occur at times when migrants are faced with significant and immediate settlement challenges such as obtaining housing, attending formal trainings through the IHSS, attending Centrelink interviews and undertaking required job capacity assessments (JCA) though Centrelink.

- When individuals miss classes due to other important commitments they may forfeit the language hours offered. This was considered unfair that migrants and refugees are effectively penalised for attending compulsory appointments with agencies like Centrelink.

- The availability of accessible transport to AMEP delivery locations also presented problems in some instances. Greater flexibility around program delivery and methods was consistently called for during consultations.

- All of these circumstances can prevent the successful learning of English under the AMEP program.

- It was recommended that more flexibility should be provided with English language training through mechanisms such as distance learning, weekend and after hours classes, workplace training and child-care support, so as to encourage the most disadvantaged in CALD communities, including CALD and refugee women, to participate in programs.

- FECCA consistently received feedback during its consultations that the AMEP program lacks sufficient flexibility to cater to the diverse needs of learners accessing the program. It was noted that migrants and refugees come to Australia with vast differences in their pre-migration experiences as well as levels of literacy, numeracy, education and English language proficiency.
The AMEP was considered to often have a ‘one size fits all’ approach that is not giving migrants and refugees the best possible opportunity to become proficient in English.

- The 510 hours offered under AMEP was often considered arbitrary and not related to vastly differing levels of individual client need (even allowing for the additional hours provided in some cases).
- It was felt that more effort could be put into providing English language training in the workplace or outside of work hours, as attainment of employment and income was a key priority for many refugees and migrants which could come at the cost of access to English language training classes, adversely affecting their successful settlement over the longer term.
- It was felt that interactions with AMEP should be based more around acquisition of English rather than a set number of hours, while recognising the need for government to contain the cost of the program. It is not helpful that large numbers of refugees are reported to be exiting the program without functional English.
- Consultations found that inadequate childcare arrangements prevented parents, and particularly refugee women, from using AMEP services.
- There was consistent feedback from consultations that English language programs should also be delivered in community settings with childcare facilities.
- There is a need for greater recognition of the particular needs of women from refugee backgrounds: they need targeted programs and services which address the caring responsibilities and transportation issues that currently often prevent them from accessing AMEP.
- It is acknowledged by FECCA that the Federal Government is addressing many of the above issues (particularly around more flexible client learning pathways) through the current AMEP review and the associated discussion paper.
- AMEP providers are also constrained by existing contractual arrangements but many are aware of problems with program flexibility and are improving services under existing funding and contractual arrangements.
- It was noted there could be an enhanced role for SBS television and radio to assist in delivering flexible English language training programs in various media, at family and work friendly times, particularly with the onset of digital television and radio which potentially enhances broadcasting capacity.
4.1.2 Language Literacy and Numeracy Program

- The Language Learning and Numeracy Program (LLNP) is also acknowledged as being important in helping migrants enter the workforce and training.

- Similar issues arose as with the AMEP around the need for flexibility in program design and the need for culturally sensitive and accessible program delivery.

- Again, flexibility through distance learning methods, weekend and after hours classes, workplace training, and child-care support were needed in LLNP programs to make them more accessible to migrant and refugee communities.

- It was noted that some new arrivals are ‘turned off’ by the often formal settings under LLNP and prefer community settings, which create a more welcoming, friendly and informal environment that for them is more conducive to learning. There could be opportunities for greater brokerage of services with migrant resource centres and ethno-specific service providers to assist here.

4.1.3 Secondary School Retention Rates (state administered but part federally funded)

- It was noted consistently in consultations that refugee adolescents were often facing inadequate support when entering the secondary education system. This was because of the age-class nexus, with students placed in classes according to age rather than ability. For students with low-level English language proficiency and low-level learning skills this often causes social embarrassment, resulting in them dropping out of school, causing social problems later on.

- To foster better secondary school retention rates for refugee adolescent students, more effort is needed to ensure adequate structures and support mechanisms are in place at the state level.
5. YOUTH SERVICES: ACCESS AND EQUITY ISSUES FOR CALD YOUTH

Of Australia’s total population of 20 million 14 percent are aged 15-24. Of these, 310,832 were born overseas in a ‘non main English speaking country’ (2006 ABS).

There is recognition among organisations working with CALD youth that services are not being readily accessed by this group. Key barriers include: language, availability of public transport, understanding systems and processes, financial barriers, and trusting in the confidentiality and respectfulness in the provision of services. Racism and discrimination have also been identified as potential barriers, although it also has been noted that young people from multicultural backgrounds demonstrate high levels of strength, resilience, resourcefulness and understanding.

Following the initial settlement period, many refugees do not access services that they require. Generalist services often lack the knowledge, experience and flexibility to provide specialised services for migrant and refugee youth. Many of these services may not be culturally sensitive or appropriate in relation to issues like language, dress codes, dietary needs, family wishes, and mixing of genders.

General feedback during the consultations included the need for a high level CALD youth policy, the need to embed best practice in CALD service delivery across all youth programs and the need to ensure service providers had secure, on-going funding streams.

The findings in this section relate to youth services funded by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) and the Department of Family, Housing Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA).

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9 Centre for Multicultural Youth, Multicultural Youth Briefing Paper, July 2008.

10 ibid

DEEWR houses the Youth Bureau with responsibility for youth policy, research and programs targeted specifically to young people. DEEWR’s strategic framework includes strengthening equity by: developing community capacity; increasing fair access; and providing funding to areas of greatest need.

This report examines two DEEWR youth programs, YouthLinx and Mentor Marketplace Program, which are designed to assist vulnerable young Australians improve their level of engagement and to overcome barriers to participation. In terms of providing services for education and training, the Job Placement and Employment Training (JPET) scheme is also examined.

FaHCSIA identifies its purpose as ‘improving the lives of Australians by helping to build the capacity and wellbeing of individuals, families and communities’. It also aims to support people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds.

FaHCSIA provides funding for youth programs including:

- The Newly Arrived Youth Support Service (NAYSS) with funding of $480,000 per annum which is jointly funded with States and Territories. NAYSS provides culturally appropriate services to newly arrived young people aged 12 to 21, ranging from early intervention to transition to education, training and employment. NAYSS is run by service providers across states and territories with the lead provider being the Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY).

- Reconnect— which offers general early intervention support for ‘at risk’ youth.

**5.1 Youth Services: Feedback from Consultations**

**5.1.1 Policy**

- The lack of government youth social policy frameworks that incorporate CALD youth was cited as an issue that impacts on service provision. For instance Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY) called for a National Agenda on Multicultural Youth.

- The absence of a youth framework within the Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Program (IHSS) and the Settlement Grants Program (SGP) programs, for example, has resulted in issues for young CALD migrants and refugees potentially not being properly addressed.

- Inclusion of a youth policy framework to address specific CALD youth issues and link departmental resources would ensure better long-term outcomes for CALD youth.
5.1.2 Sector Funding and Staffing

- There was appreciation by the CALD sector of funding from FaHCSIA for a range of programs accessible to CALD youth and children and refugee youth, such as the CALD Family Program run through the MRC Northern Tasmania; the Multicultural Solutions Project, though the Multicultural Council of Northern Territory; and Supporting Refugee Families to Independence, run through the MRC South Australia.

- Feedback indicated that government funded youth programs with short term annual funding created serious difficulties with program continuity, planning, service provision and staffing for service providers. As an example, the Multicultural Solutions Project (FaHCSIA) was previously funded for three years and, while there has been some funding increase, despite successful outcomes, length of funding was reduced to 12 months.

- There was concern that short term funding generally impacts on young clients adversely and hinders successful outcomes.

- Longer term funding of around three years would allow for quality, long-term outcomes.

- Concerns were also expressed around a lack of coordination between government bodies and levels of government in funding and service provision for CALD youth.

- Within the NAYSS program a major concern was staff being overworked with caseloads. Suggestions to resolve this issue included more funding to meet the demands of the caseloads and training for workers in caseload management.

- Another concern was the lack of training for youth and social work students on refugee and migrant issues. Training and scholarships aimed at CALD youth would help overcome the lack of knowledge on issues affecting CALD youth.

5.1.3 Cultural Awareness

- Service providers’ capability to respond to the needs of CALD Youth requires staff training in cultural sensitivity and awareness. While some services engage in cultural awareness training this is often taken on additionally by individual staff. For example, members of the Multicultural
Youth Issues Network (NSW) conduct cultural sensitivity training with local services through the Youth Action and Policy Association (YAPA).

- Programs and services for young people and children need to more systematically respond in an effective manner to cultural, linguistic and faith diversity. Examples of best practice in this area are the Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY) and Multicultural Youth South Australia. Both organisations work with government and non-government organisations and schools to provide cross cultural training, resources and support.

5.1.4 Housing

- Accessing appropriate housing was highlighted as a major issue for newly arrived CALD youth. Refugee young people are estimated to be six to ten times more likely to experience homelessness.\(^\text{12}\)

- At a forum for newly arrived migrants and humanitarian entrants in Western Australia the housing crisis was seen as the most pressing issue. Key factors were housing availability, affordability, and tenancy education.\(^\text{13}\)

- While Reconnect (FaHCSIA) is a mainstream program offering early intervention support for at risk youth, some of its service providers also target CALD youth such as South East Asian Reconnect, Adelaide; and CMY Reconnect.

- Other services offering effective culturally sensitive services include Reconnect St George and Twenty10 in Sydney, and Melbourne City Mission.

- The NAYSS (FaHCSIA) program also provides support for newly arrived CALD youth who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Inconsistent funding for NAYSS programs across Australia has resulted in some NAYSS programs being better resourced and hence better able to provide accessible and equitable service to clients. As a result some areas with a high population of


\(^{13}\) NAYSS Western Australia: Aiding settlement amidst WA’s current housing crisis (ASeTTS WA, 399kb). Available: http://www.cmy.net.au/NAYSS/GoodPracticeForums?searchTerms[]=tania&searchTerms[]=groba
CALD youth are under resourced. A stronger CALD youth framework at the policy level would assist in identifying settlement patterns and more effectively targeting areas of need.

- There is a lack of consistent housing services for multicultural young people throughout the housing sector, although some individual services provide culturally sensitive and inclusive housing and support.

- Footscray Youth Housing, for example has a targeted Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) program called the ‘Newly Arrived Young Immigrant’s Housing Support Program’.

- The SAAP program is a mainstream housing service, jointly funded by state and federal governments. While it lacks specific services for CALD youth, following a review in 2007, standards for practice in working with refugee and CALD youth were introduced. These included use of interpreters and suggestions for a more integrated allocation system.

- Longer term funding is required for early intervention for newly arrived CALD youth.

- Specific orientation programs are required that provide knowledge and skills for CALD youth to access housing and support.

- There needs to be sector wide funding and training to meet the increasing demands of caseworkers.

5.1.5 Family Support

- CALD youth have identified family as a priority issue. Working within the family context was acknowledged as a key factor when working with CALD youth.

- NAYSS workers identified the challenge of balancing culture and expectations of families with organisations and programs. Recommended strategies included working collaboratively with communities and adopting a holistic approach with families.

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• It is important that service provision and policy development recognise the diversity of family structures and position CALD youth within the context of their family and community and connections.

• As youth specific support services, NAYSS and Reconnect were credited with good practice in their adoption of a family context framework.

• There is evidence that services are being under utilised by young CALD and also refugee women who are pregnant or parenting.16

• While some organisations provide support (e.g., Darebin City Council and Australian Lebanese Welfare in Melbourne), it was felt that there was generally insufficient family support available for younger people.

• In consultations areas of greatest need were cited as crisis housing, support accessing health services and financial assistance.

• The DIAC Muslim Youth Summit report 2007 cited intergenerational conflict as an issue and included a recommendation for further government funding for English language training and funding for parenting skills courses that are culturally and religiously sensitive for migrant and ethnic communities.

• The IWWCV Community Capacity Building Program Development in Victoria is funded under the DIAC National Action Plan and includes a program (CIRCLE) that addresses intergenerational issues between parents and children and provides information about Australian adolescent development, effective parenting and peaceful conflict resolution. This has been an effective program.

• The NSW Department of Community Services also provides an online magazine in partnership with Arabic speaking and Pacific communities as a resource for parenting teens, which federal agencies could consider.

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• **YouthLinx**, funded by DEEWR, is a mainstream prevention and early intervention program that supports young people aged 11 to 16 and their families.

• YouthLinx works within a family context framework and includes culture in its guide to good practice for service provision.

• While there is evidence of cultural inclusion with some service providers, such as Casey YouthLinx, many services appear to maintain a mainstream focus.

• Reaching out to include CALD youth and their families through the promotion of cultural inclusivity by service providers and through funding of multicultural programs would enable participation of CALD youth in activities and provide support for CALD at risk families in need of support.

• **The Mentor Marketplace Program** (DEEWR) encourages the use of mentoring activities to improve outcomes for young people, particularly those at greatest risk of disconnection from their families, community, education and work.

• The Australian Government has provided $12 million for the Mentor Marketplace Program over four years ending 30 June 2009. The program currently has funding agreements with 26 service providers across Australia.

• Two programs targeting CALD youth are a program in Victoria to mentor young people in Muslim communities, and a program in Lakemba and Macquarie Fields for those at risk of disconnection from their families and communities. These programs are considered beneficial.

### 5.1.6 Education, Training and Employment

• Consultations and research revealed a gap in transition pathways for 16-24 year old CALD youth and refugees. DEEWR programs, such as the Job Placement and Employment Training (JPET), target mainstream youth.

• Given the specific support requirements of CALD youth and refugees, these programs and services were seen as not being particularly well utilised by CALD and refugee younger people.

• While some service providers assisted clients in accessing these programs (MRC South Australia JPET) it was noted that it is difficult to deliver ‘good practice’ services for CALD youth through
mainstream funding streams. Refugee and migrant young people often require more intensive support and alternative pathways between education, training and employment.

- DEEWR youth service provision must address the needs of refugee and CALD youth through the provision of specialist employment services and evaluation of programs to ensure they meet the needs of CALD youth and refugees.
- Both FaHCSIA and DEEWR would benefit from further consultation with CALD communities and organisations to ensure the equitable access of their programs and services by CALD youth.
- The establishment of national multicultural reference groups, similar to that set up by Centrelink, would be a valuable mechanism towards achieving this outcome.
- Concerns were expressed by many African community members that state controlled (but part federally funded) state schools have inadequate support structures in place for refugee youth from non-English speaking backgrounds, who may then drop out of school leading to social problems down the track.

5.1.7 Justice

- CMYI noted that multicultural young people may feel distrust towards police and perceive racial stereotyping from police. Previous experience with police in a migrant’s country of origin and lack of local understanding can exacerbate these tensions.
- Multicultural young people note that ‘youth group formations’ in public space may be interpreted as gang activity by police and this is an area for greater understanding.
- Training for Australian Federal Police and encouraging state police to continue to strengthen initiatives to improve relations and understanding between CALD young people and police is seen as a priority.
6.0 WOMEN’S SERVICES: ACCESS AND EQUITY FOR CALD WOMEN

Women from CALD backgrounds may experience additional barriers to government service delivery creating situations of double disadvantage. Groups of women who experience multiple disadvantage include refugee and humanitarian entrants, those from new and emerging communities, women with disabilities and older women from CALD backgrounds.

As a highly disadvantaged group CALD women tend to show greater representation in unsecured and lower wage jobs.\(^{17}\) Compounding the situation is a perceived lack of flexible and appropriate and accessible English language programmes for certain groups of migrant women; issues surrounding accreditation of overseas qualifications; and lack of access to training and education options within regional areas.

Access and equity remain a particular concern in the following areas:

- Judiciary and family law
- Financial literacy
- Workforce participation
- Childcare service provision
- Interpreter services

Consultations revealed that women from newly arrived communities, refugee and humanitarian entrants were seen as being in greatest need for education about the rights of women and children, and for resources to improve access to services.

A general lack of cultural and religious competency and sensitivity by service providers was cited as an issue for participants in the HREOC Muslim Women’s Project (2008).\(^{18}\) It was felt there was a gap across service provision in knowledge and skills to assist Muslim women cope with negative stereotyping, discrimination, vilification and abuse. An absence of appropriate and easily accessible social support services for Muslim women was also noted.

It was felt that cultural competency should include more than the use of translated material and that adequate and ongoing training to all staff at senior and junior levels in cultural competency should be

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17 FECCA Women’s Policy Statement 2007

provided across all service providers. Suggested strategies included a grievance handling mechanism for racism and bullying within policies and procedures; and staff education on rights and responsibilities.

6.1 Judiciary and Family Law

- As Muslim women are readily identifiable from their name or dress they continue experience racial and religious discrimination. Muslim women participating in the HREOC Muslim Women’s Project identified discrimination in employment and in the provision of medical, government or rental services (particularly in regional areas) as common experiences.

- Police and the legal system have traditionally been problematic areas in regards to cultural knowledge and sensitivity, particularly with issues such as family and domestic violence in the CALD community. Several programmes have been set up to address this. The Community Partnerships for Human Rights (CPHR) program funded by DIAC under the National Action Plan provides information and strategies to deal with discrimination and harassment for Muslim Australians. Projects within this programme include the Community and Police Partnerships project; and the Living Spirit project that included a component on addressing discrimination and prejudice against Muslim women in Australia.

- CALD women have problems obtaining access to existing resources and structures in the family law system. Changes to the Family Law Act have acted as a disincentive for women to seek service. The risks and disadvantages for a woman of disclosing violence in a relationship are magnified for people whose first language is not English.

- Participants of the Muslim women’s project and FECCA consultations identified barriers in accessing complaints and reporting services. Reasons cited for not lodging complaints or reporting incidents of racial and/or religious discrimination, vilification or abuse were:
  - lack of knowledge of where to go for assistance
  - lack of English language skills and access to translation and interpretation services that were available free of cost
  - feelings of suspicion and distrust of police, and formal and government institutions, due to their past experiences prior to arrival
  - fear of confronting the perpetrator for fear of retribution


20 Ibid

- lack of confidence in reaching a useful outcome
- feeling uncomfortable with the process of making a complaint due to unfamiliarity with the process

- Suggested strategies were based on education about anti-discrimination laws, human rights and complaints processes, through capacity building workshops and information in a range of languages.

### 6.2 Financial Literacy

- Refugee and CALD women face a range of barriers in accessing information and services from financial institutions and government income-support agencies. Research undertaken for the Office for Women (2007) cited a lack of financial information resources in community languages; difficulties in accessing interpreter services and interpreter’s lack understanding of financial terms as barriers to accessing services.\(^{22}\)

- Managing fortnightly Centrelink payments were seen as a problem for some newly arrived women used to budgeting on a day to day basis. Other issues included repayment of adolescent children’s debts that are usually placed on mothers; and cultural issues in some communities around discussing financial issues.

- Refugee women face specific barriers due to interrupted schooling and a lack of basic literacy and numeracy in their own language. In particular, the first two years of settlement were seen as critical in providing women with information to help them adjust to a new financial system.

- The **Household Organisational Management Expenses (HOME) programme**, funded by FaHCSIA, is a mainstream ‘early intervention’ programme to support families in need. The programme currently consists of one agency per state and territory jurisdiction. The majority of those entering the programme are female headed sole parent families (52%) most with at least two children. The programme uses a family centred framework considered good practice for casework. While an evaluation of the programme\(^{23}\) highlighted successful outcomes in a number of areas, the programme was not readily accessed by CALD and refugee women and families, with location of programmes seen as a causal factor.

- Migrant, refugee and humanitarian families accounted for around 14 percent of families, with most of these located within one region in Victoria. Only four per cent of all participants spoke

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little or no English with the highest proportion from Afghanistan (1.5% of all cases) and Vietnam (1.1%). Victoria and Northern Territory programmes were located within areas of high CALD population and while the Victorian programme was well accessed (34 per cent from NESB) the lack of access by CALD families in NT was seen to be linked with the programme’s demanding focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

- While the programme was seen to be effective in addressing issues around financial management, as financial literacy is a major concern within certain CALD communities and in particular within the first years of settlement, the programme could more successfully target CALD women and families in need of support by a focus on delivery in areas with high CALD populations.

6.3 Workforce Participation

- It was noted that the Australian Industrial Relations Commission no longer has a transparent system of recording workplace agreements, following individualised workplace bargaining. This has made the task of educating and informing stakeholders about equal remuneration more difficult. CALD women have been further affected with the loss of an obligation for collective agreements information and education to be adequately explained to young people and to those from a non-English speaking background. This previous regulation particularly addressed the needs of women from non-English speaking backgrounds.  

6.3.1 Overseas Qualifications

- Consultations highlighted a lack of recognition of overseas qualifications for skilled migrant women as a continuing barrier to working within their field of expertise. Additional education and training is often required before qualifications are recognised, however this often competes with settlement priorities such as English language classes, finding appropriate accommodation and employment and settling families into a new environment.

- It was suggested that there be fairer and more prompt recognition of professional qualifications; and investment in flexible bridging training to allow for equitable access to employment in chosen vocations.

6.3.2 Job Capacity Assessments

- The timing of Job Capacity Assessments for refugees and IHSS entrants within days of arrival was seen as an unrealistic expectation on the part of government service providers. A lack of English proficiency, the lack of a driver’s license and little knowledge of public transport at this early stage of arrival were seen as barriers to clients meeting appointments.

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24 Former s 170LT Workplace Relations Act 1996
• Consultations also revealed the lack of cultural competency of Job Capacity Assessors (JCAs) continued to present barriers to service provision for CALD people with disabilities. In 2007 steps were taken to include cultural competence training for JCA assessors; however it was felt that further measures could be taken. For example, there have been instances of misunderstanding around the nature of the person’s disability, even when a translator is used. In addition, expert medical opinion has been de-emphasised. Medical officers provide detailed assessments where linguistic and cultural barriers are taken into account.

• It was felt that further measures to address cultural competency of the Job Capacity Assessment regime by providing easily available translated material and assistance prior to assessments; for assessments to be carried out in the client’s preferred language; and on-going training for job capacity assessors would be welcome, as well as JCA evaluation processes that includes equitable outcomes for CALD people with disability.

6.4 Child Care Service Provision
• Consultations revealed that childcare services present a major issue for CALD women; particularly those newly arrived who do not have support mechanisms in place. While childcare is generally in short supply the situation is compounded for CALD women due to language barriers and a lack of understanding of the service system. Most childcare centres however, are not resourced to include interpreter services. In addition supplementary childcare workers for children with special needs no longer talk to parents but communicate solely through the staff at centres, who often may lack cultural competency.

6.5 Interpreter Services
• Issues were also raised in regards to interpreter services and the concern by women in smaller regions such as the ACT where CALD communities have smaller populations that limited translators could result in confidentiality breaches. This can have far reaching consequences, particularly surrounding sensitive issues such as domestic violence. One example given was a medical practitioner who breached a woman’s confidentiality about a domestic violence case and consequently the woman has been shunned by her community for speaking out.

• Comments on the JET Child Care Fee Assistance (JETCCFA) were made in terms of appreciation of the increase in time for assistance to two years, however it was also noted that for women undertaking more than two years of study childcare costs remained an issue.

6.6 CALD Women with Disability
• CALD people with disability have traditionally experienced poor access and utilisation of Government funded employment services. 25The Australian Government Services Productivity Commission’s recent services report noted a lower use of CSTDA (Commonwealth

25 NEDA submission to the National Mental Health and Disability Employment Strategy, June 2008
State/Territory Disability Agreement) funded employment services by people from NESB than those from English speaking backgrounds.  

- These barriers are compounded for CALD Women with disability who experience multiple disadvantage when accessing services. For this reason they have been identified as being particularly vulnerable in terms of workforce participation and equity in the workforce. They are less likely to be in paid work than other women, men with disabilities or the population as a whole.

6.7 Programmes

Additional programmes run for CALD women are the Family Relationship Services, the Women’s Leadership and Development Programme; and the Support for Victims of People Trafficking Programme.

6.7.1 Family Relationships Services

- Family Relationships Services (FRS) is a mainstream programme funded by FaHCSIA and run through service agencies around Australia. Some agencies offer services that are CALD sensitive such as RASA and several offer services specifically for CALD communities such as Centacare’s Transcultural Family Services for Chinese and Vietnamese Communities. In addition, FRS offers a specialised programme for humanitarian entrants run through agencies such as the Brotherhood of St Lawrence and some Migrant Resource Centres. The Stronger Families Programme for Refugees and Migrant Communities run by the Brotherhood of St Laurence, for example, focuses on African migrants and includes group programmes for women.

6.7.2 Women’s Leadership and Development Programme

- In the general population, women are underrepresented in senior management roles, company boards and committees, politics and the judiciary, in particular within the private sector.  

- While women in general are under represented in these fields, women from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities experience additional barriers. Given the circumstances of newly arrived migrants the additional training for qualification recognition must compete with settlement priorities of English language classes, finding appropriate accommodation and employment and settling families into a new environment, often without family support structures. Qualification recognition therefore takes a back seat resulting in downward occupational mobility.

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**FECCA recommends that specific consideration is given to removing constraints that impede CALD women’s political and economic participation. This includes strengthening mentoring and leadership programmes; such as the Women’s Leadership and Development Programme; increasing the representation of CALD women in decision-making roles; giving greater visibility and voice to CALD women in the media, arts, and sports; and the provision of funding to organisations that specially work with CALD women.**

**Two CALD community organisations received funding for women’s projects under the Women’s Leadership and Development Programme (WLDP), through the Office for Women, in 2007-2008. The Muslim Women’s National Network of Australia received around $100,000 for the SILC-Organisational Development Programme; and the Multicultural Centre for Women’s Health also received around $100,000 for the project: Points of Departure: Immigrant and Refugee Women’s Leadership and Advocacy Project. Proposals were selected on their ability to:**

- promote women's social inclusion;
- build women’s capacity to take on greater leadership responsibilities;
- build the capacity of women’s non-government organisations to represent the views of their members and contribute to the development of public policy and service delivery.

The substantial funding of $2.1 million for the programme and inclusion of CALD organisations is a welcome step to removing constraints which impede CALD women’s political and economic contributions to Australian society.

### 6.7.3 Support for Victims of People Trafficking Programme

- **The Support for Victims of People Trafficking Programme is coordinated by the Office for Women, Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA). The Programme provides support to victims of people trafficking who are both willing and able to assist with criminal investigations and prosecutions of people trafficking offences within Australia. A non-government specialist organisation provides case management services.**

- **On 1 July 2008, there were 34 people in the Support Programme. Of the total number of clients supported since the programme began in 2004, 65 per cent have been Thai nationals and 19 per cent have been South Korean.**

- **Victims of trafficking by the nature of their circumstances are highly marginalised. As such, stigmatisation and stereotyping serve as barriers to receiving appropriate service delivery. Engagement with agencies have cultural competency and expertise in working with sex workers and sexual assault victims would effectively extend the services that can be offered under the programme while ensuring services are appropriate to clients' needs.**
A 2008 report Trafficking of Women for Sexual Purposes\textsuperscript{28} identified issues and made several recommendations to improve the programme, including greater accessibility for women who are victims of trafficking and the development of a service standard to allow effective performance monitoring. This would be developed with input from the various agencies that work most directly with suspected victims of trafficking, such as the AFP and CDPP. Other recommendations pertaining to access and equity of service provision included:

- Funding culturally appropriate outreach services for women. Most information is provided in written form, however outreach workers with relevant language skills could also be utilised for information provision.
- Expanding AFP training on working with victims of crime.
- Continuing to build training opportunities for prosecutors.
- Ensuring federally funded victim support measures are high quality and comprehensive; and
- Building cooperation CALD community service providers.
- Mechanisms to allow for data collection and evaluation of the programme and services provided.