

27 February 2017

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ECCV response to elder abuse inquiry discussion paper by ALRC

The Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria Inc. (ECCV) is the 'voice' of multicultural Victoria. As the peak policy advocacy body for ethnic and multicultural organisations in Victoria, we are proud to have been the key advocate for culturally, linguistically, and religiously diverse communities in Victoria since 1974.

ECCV's project experience in preventing elder abuse in multicultural communities

Since 2012 ECCV has been working to prevent elder abuse amongst older people from culturally, linguistically, and religiously diverse backgrounds. As part of its project, ECCV has been delivering community education to groups and people with less knowledge on how to access information on elder abuse and available support services. Senior Rights Victoria has been partnering with the ECCV in delivering community education to members of culturally diverse communities. Until this point in time, the project has primarily engaged with stakeholders, groups, and community agencies from the Chinese-speaking, Greek, Macedonian, Serbian, Turkish, Vietnamese, Filipino, Indian, Russian-Jewish communities (Click [here](#) or visit the ECCV website for more information on the project).

A national plan on elder abuse

ECCV suggest that a national pan on elder abuse considers a culturally responsive elder abuse prevention framework in responding appropriately and sensitively to issues associated with culturally diverse traditions and expectations and to ensure high impact across Australian population groups and communities.

ECCV states that a culturally responsive framework in the context of a national plan on elder abuse focuses on

- Consideration of migration-related issues;
- Delivery of culturally inclusive community education;
- Optimal usage of interpreters and translation materials;
- Effective responses through multicultural capacity building;
- Culturally responsive awareness raising.

Consideration of migration-related issues

ECCV states that older people migrating to Australia under the Contributory Parent visa scheme and particularly those with little knowledge of English are very vulnerable when experiencing elder abuse by their adult children. The ECCV elder abuse prevention project has found that seniors from the Chinese, Indian, and Filipino communities are particularly vulnerable when relationships between the adult children and their parent break down. ECCV anecdotal evidence indicates that older parents who arrive under the Contributory Parent visa scheme often transfer their assets and money to their adult children and may be ineligible for services in Australia, and as such, are very dependent on their adult children and vulnerable.

Delivery of culturally inclusive community education

ECCV suggests the delivery of culturally appropriate community education and information sessions about elder abuse across Australia and in targeting culturally diverse seniors, families, carers and seniors groups.

ECCV has found that its awareness raising project on elder abuse has resulted in a significant increase of elder abuse incidents being reported across participating culturally diverse communities. The ECCV project findings also suggest that community education is most effective when delivered in the language spoken by the participants as it helps to facilitate a flow in dialogue and establish a rapport between the educator and the group. ECCV further notes that bilingual and in-language information and education on elder abuse has the potential to reach a large proportion of people within the targeted group.

Optimal usage of interpreters and translation materials

Interpreting is key for mainstream organisations in working effectively with seniors from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. The ECCV project insights indicate that interpreters are often able to detect when an older person is experiencing elder abuse. ECCV has also noted that in some instances where an interpreter is present, professionals have focused more on communicating with the family member or the carer rather than the older persons themselves and thereby 'running into the risk' of isolating the older person further. This is a particularly sensitive issue when the older person is being abused by their principal carer.

ECCV notes the lack of professional education for interpreters on elder abuse and prevention. Considerations on professional training for interpreters may include clarifying professional ethics and the relationship of duty of care and impartial interpreting.

ECCV suggests translating information sheets on elder abuse to help raise awareness on older people's rights and elder abuse prevention for distribution to culturally diverse seniors, families, carers, ethnic seniors' citizens clubs and multicultural services providers. The ECCV project on elder abuse has significant expertise in communicating and translating key messages to culturally diverse people and any further work can build on the expertise developed by ECCV.

Effective responses through multicultural capacity building

ECCV notes that culturally inclusive, ethno-specific and multicultural agencies are well placed to inform culturally diverse people on available services when elder abuse occurs. ECCV has found that that culturally diverse seniors are commonly more likely to seek help from people they are familiar with, they can trust, and who are able to communicate with them appropriately.

Our project findings indicate the significant role that ethno-specific and multicultural agencies have been playing in responding to issues of elder abuse. Ethno-specific and multicultural agencies have a highly specialised expertise in cultural sensitivity and advice and in the delivery of training.

ECCV notes that effective and culturally sensitive responses on elder abuse give consideration to building and strengthening the community capacity and those of ethno-specific and multicultural agencies in helping people who experience elder abuse to access support services.

Culturally responsive awareness raising

ECCV recommends increasing awareness of elder abuse amongst culturally diverse individuals and groups. This may include the initiation of a national awareness raising campaign and which targets culturally diverse seniors and carers as well as families and seniors' groups. ECCV notes that ethnic radio and multicultural media outlets are well placed to communicate key messages on elder abuse and on support services to socially isolated and culturally diverse seniors and who are less likely to be reached through face-to-face engagement including face-to-face support services.

ECCV thanks the Australian Law Reform Commission (ALRC) for the opportunity to contribute to the discussions in the context of considerations of the ALRC on elder abuse, its discussion paper, and in forward planning

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Yours sincerely



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