



State Election 2017- ECCWA Manifesto

Whilst Australia does not have a Human Rights Act or a Charter of Rights at the national or state levels, it is a signatory to international treaties that guarantee Human Rights. They include inter alia the right to non-discrimination, the right to life, survival and development, the right to the highest attainable standard of health, and the rights to education and to information, disability etc. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in its preamble recognises the inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family as the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world. ECCWA supports all articles of the UDHR but wishes to draw attention to the following:

Article 1 which states “all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.”

Article 2 which states inter alia “everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.”

Article 7 which states “all are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination.

Article 18 which states inter alia “everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion;.....”

Article 19 which states inter alia “everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression;”

Article 21 which states inter alia “(1) Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives. (2) Everyone has the right of equal access to public service in his country.”

Article 22 which states inter alia, “everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security.....”

Article 23 which states inter alia “everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment. Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.”

Article 25 which states inter alia “everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, ...”.

Article 26 which states inter alia “Everyone has the right to education.....”

Article 29 which states (1) Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible. (2) In the exercise of his rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society. (3) These rights and freedoms may in no case be exercised contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Multiculturalism, Substantive Equality and Social Cohesion Framework

Western Australia had an excellent framework in place to achieve the objects of multiculturalism and social cohesion from the above perspective, thanks to the Gallop Government's Multiculturalism Charter, the Language Services and the Substantive Equality Policies and the Anti-Racism Strategy. Whilst the Barnett government to its credit adopted all four of them, after eight years in office, sadly substantive equality remains a pipe dream for CaLD and Indigenous Western Australians.

ECCWA has decided to adopt a two pronged approach to pursue the issues of concern to CaLD communities and to obtain as much information as possible to enable them to exercise their franchise in an informed manner. It will pursue issues of particular relevance to CaLD communities through its own election campaign and pursue broader issues that impact the wider community including CaLD communities through its membership of the Peaks Forum that is auspiced by WACOSS. ECCWA participated in the drafting of the policy platform and also made a small contribution \$1,000 towards the campaign costs. ECCWA strongly believes that we need to promote a racism/prejudice free society where diversity is valued, people live in harmony and everyone can fulfil her/his full potential. To achieve this we urge the incoming government to implement the priorities identified by the various peak bodies in WA as well as effectively implement the issues below which are of particular relevance to ethnic minorities.

1. Multiculturalism Act

An Act along the lines of what Victoria and Queensland have (i.e. The *Multicultural Victoria Act 2011* and *Queensland Multicultural Recognition Act 2016*) should be introduced. This should explore consideration of the provisions of the Religious Intolerance Act in Victoria.

2. Quarterly Meetings between Minister for Multicultural Interests and ECCWA

The Minister for Multicultural Interests met with ECCWA on a quarterly basis to discuss issues of concern to the sector before the election of the Barnett government and this needs to be restored.

3. Reformation of OMI

Create an Advisory Council as part of proposed Act to oversee a new Office/ Commission whose operational foci will be policy development, monitoring of Equity plans etc. and not to take over the functions of other departments e.g. ethnic schools as OMI has. Such an Office can function effectively with about 8 FTEs and the savings accrued will easily cover the initiatives proposed in this manifesto.

4. Peak Body Funding

Restore Funding of ECCWA as a peak body on similar lines as in all other states and territories. The Australian government's increasing emphasis on consumer directed care which provides choice and control to consumers is long overdue and most welcome. Unfortunately, in the process competition in the delivery of community services is becoming increasingly fierce and that is unhealthy for consumers because it threatens the viability of medium and small organisations that are responsible for the diversity of choice that's available to the consumer. Under these circumstances the need for effective systemic advocacy across all sectors within the community services industry is paramount. Advocacy has to be independent of service provision for it to be meaningful, accountable and effective and state and commonwealth. From a substantive equality perspective, ECCWA believes that an Ethnic peak body should get much more than \$100,000 per year which was the level

of funding provided to ECCWA annually until 6 years ago. It also believes that a figure of \$150,000 pa would be a good start and it should be subjected to the same terms as the funding provided to other peak bodies by the state government.

5. Substantive Equality Unit

CaLD representation in government boards and other decision making bodies is woefully inadequate as evidenced by the statistics provided in Parliament by the Executive Director of OMI in June last year and that situation has hardly changed since. The above unit was disbanded by the Barnett government and if it cannot be re-established alternative mechanisms should be explored to ensure the achievement of substantive equality objectives.

6. Language Services Policy and the Charter of Multiculturalism

These policies are not being implemented adequately or effectively and most importantly not being monitored at all. This should be a priority for the incoming government.

7. Anti-Racism Strategy

The One Nation Party's racist ideology has received a significant fillip with 4 senators and with more than \$1.6 million being allocated to it by the AEC as the initial payment for the primary votes it attracted. With the election/re-election of some non-major party senators, the push to repeal Section 18C of the Racial Discrimination Act has gained momentum. These taxpayer funded "racist" initiatives need to be countered effectively and all levels of government and societal institutions and a well-funded anti-racism strategy should be implemented to achieve that objective.

8. Multicultural Clinical Mental Health Services

The woeful inadequacy of the above should be addressed as a matter of urgency. The Transcultural mental health unit should be re-established and funded adequately to operate as a State wide unit. Lack of CaLD suicide prevention programs is also of major concern and should be addressed.

9. Funding of Community Languages

The changes made by the by the Barnett government are not in the best interests of ensuring quality teaching/learning of community languages. The funding for this program should be substantially increased and its implementation should revert to the Education Department. The Italian Insertion Program should be refunded and the Ethnic Schools Association should be funded to provide communities who wish to participate in this program.

10. Domestic and Family Violence

Family violence is of growing concern not just within the wider community but increasingly so amongst the CaLD communities. Whilst culturally and linguistically appropriate support and advocacy services for victims are critical, funding should also be available for programs that focus on perpetrators to diminish the prevalence of such violence.

11. Housing & Homelessness

Homelessness and the Lack of affordable housing especially for large families are of serious concern.

12. Multicultural Disability and aged care services

The above services are woefully underfunded and the service gaps should be addressed urgently

13. Parenting Programs

The lack of culturally and linguistically appropriate parenting programs is of serious concern and needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

14. Services for migrants and refugees resident in Australia for more than 5 years

People in the above category are not eligible for Commonwealth's Settlement Services Program and the state government should explore how best their needs can be met.

15. Community Arts

The above is woefully underfunded and the closure of Kulcha has made the situation worse. This needs to be addressed urgently.

16. Services for CaLD population in Regional and Rural Areas

A comprehensive strategy should be developed to better address the needs of the above.

ECCWA intends pursuing the aforementioned issues in its election campaign and has drafted questions which are being forwarded to the major political parties for their responses. It is also organising a Per Election Forum on the 7/8th February to provide ECCWA member organisations and other stakeholders

Peaks Forum

As a member of the Peaks Forum that is auspiced by WACOSS, ECCWA strongly supports

The following priorities that have been identified:

- **Poverty** (addressing inequality, income and wealth)
- **Housing & Homelessness** (including affordable and accessible social housing and homelessness services)
- **Community Health** (including mental health, alcohol and other drugs, Aboriginal health)
- **Justice** (including the Social Reinvestment WA campaign priorities)
- **Children, young people & families** (including early childhood development)
- **Family and Domestic Violence** (including WA Safe Systems campaign)

In addressing these priorities ECCWA firmly believe that the incoming government should take into account the impact of a number of events within and outside Australia which have resulted in increasing anti-ethnic and anti-religious sentiments as well as prejudice which has made life difficult for the LGBTI community, thanks to the divisiveness and pejorative nature of the Marriage Equality debate.

In this context ECCWA strongly recommends the implementation of the Anti-Racism strategy that is identified under the ECCWA Election Issues in order to promote a just, equitable and harmonious society. With NDIS and Aged care adopting the person centred/consumer directed care model which has/will result in a significant increase in the number of service providers including private profit entities, the relevant authorities will not be able to continue to maintain their rigorous audit/compliance regime.

To address this ECCWA believes that it is critical that the government restores the Substantive Equality Unit within the Equal Opportunity Commission or adopt effective alternative mechanisms for this purpose and also ensure that all peak bodies in WA are provided adequate core funding to undertake systemic advocacy.