A Home for Diversity:

Building the Capacity of Homelessness Services to Meet the Needs of Older Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Victorians

Project Report, August 2016

Prepared by Housing for the Aged Action Group

Contents

Foreword

In 2015, Housing for the Aged Action Group partnered with the Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria on the *Preventing Homelessness in Older Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities* project. This ground breaking initiative not only resulted in significantly improving access to affordable housing for older CALD people, it identified strategies on how homelessness services could better work with culturally diverse people.

Housing for the Action Group was keen for the important learnings from the project to be shared with other housing services, so that access to housing services for older CALD people could be improved. The *A Home for Diversity* project developed and delivered training, in partnership with Centre for Ethnicity and Health, to housing workers. The process of developing the training involved close consultation with both the homelessness sector and CALD communities. It built upon the insights and knowledge of the first project, to ensure that this information was not lost and could be embedded into every day practice within the housing and homelessness sector.

The project has had some exciting outcomes. Tailored training specific to the housing sector on how they can better work with older culturally diverse people has been developed and delivered across a number of sites in Victoria. In addition, the project revealed a wealth of information that is valuable to any service provider working with older members of culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

This report explains the processes undertaken in the project, and summarizes some of the information gleaned from consultations with CALD communities and the housing sector. We hope that this project is valuable for anyone who is working with older CALD people, and encourages services to reflect on and improve their practices.

We are proud of our collaborative approach and commend our project worker, Gemma White, for her vision and dedication. We would also like to express our sincere thanks to the Centre for Culture, Ethnicity and Health, Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation for its generous support of the project, the Culturally and Linguistically Diverse reference group and the Homelessness and Housing Reference group for their valuable insights and expertise.

Daisy Ellery
Chairperson
Housing for the Aged Action Group

Executive summary

A Home for diversity was a 6 month project that aimed increase the capacity of homelessness services to work with people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds. The project provides training to housing workers, particularly those who work with older people. This training was provided by the Centre for Culture, Ethnicity and Health, in collaboration with Housing for the Aged Action Group and ran from July to September 2016.

In the process of gathering information to inform the contents of the training package, a number of stakeholders were consulted. These were, a Community Reference Group, a Housing and Homelessness Sector Reference Group, interviews with 5 services users and a survey of Housing and Homelessness workers with 89 responses.

This report has been created in response to the valuable and comprehensive information provided by these stakeholders, particularly on the ability of the Housing and Homelessness sector to respond to the needs of people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds.

Summary of Recommendations

The need to increase access to mainstream services

Recommendation 1:

That ethno-specific and multicultural services receive secure and targeted funding so that they can continue to provide pathways for culturally diverse communities to access services.

Recommendation 2:

That programs such as the Commonwealth Home Support Program Specialised Support Service (formerly HACC Access and Support program) be replicated in other sectors so that people from culturally diverse backgrounds have access to a worker who can liaise between their community and mainstream services.

Recommendation 3:

That resources be provided for the translation of written materials and that targeted community education be integrated into services to break down barriers to access and encourage migrant and refugee families to actively access housing and homelessness services.

The need to increase the capacity of Homelessness and Housing Services to respond to people from CALD backgrounds

Recommendation 4:

That housing and homelessness support services receive adequate funding to increase staff numbers so that staff have time to work in a culturally competent manner- including using interpreters when needed and communicating vital information effectively.

Recommendation 5:

That the *Cultural Competence in Housing* training, developed through the 'A Home for Diversity' project, be offered to all Housing and Homelessness Agencies and programs, and that it is subsidised by the Department of Health and Human Services.

The need to review available interpreting services

Recommendation 5:

That a review of the Victorian Interpreting and Translating Service (VITS) be conducted to ensure consistent quality across interpreting services.

Recommendation 6:

That the National Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) be available to all government funded services.

The need for government to provide secure, affordable housing

Recommendation 7:

That the Victorian Government increase public housing stock so that waiting times are reduced and the public housing system can serve its intended purpose of providing shelter for those who are most vulnerable, including people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

The need to investigate discrimination in the private rental market

Recommendation 8:

That the Victorian Government conduct a review of discrimination in the private rental market, especially discrimination faced by people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Recommendation 9:

That the review of discrimination in the private rental market also includes a review of Transitional Housing Managers (THMs) and other types of emergency housing such as rooming houses.

Project Background

A Home for diversity is a 6 month project that will increase the capacity of homelessness services to work with people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds. The project provides training to housing workers, particularly those who work with older people. This training was provided by the Centre for Culture, Ethnicity and Health, in collaboration with Housing for the Aged Action Group.

About HAAG

HAAG is a state-wide member based organisation that provides housing information services to older low income renters. HAAG's philosophy is that older people should have

access to safe, secure and affordable housing. HAAG also advocates that older tenants have a right to be involved in the development of ideas, plans and decisions about their housing. HAAG works collaboratively towards fair policies and laws which will provide secure, long-term and affordable housing tenure.

HAAG has been a specialist older persons housing organisation since 1983. HAAG understands the needs of vulnerable older people and has tailored its services to best respond to its clients. HAAG's assistance is incorporated under the *Home at Last* service (Department of Human Services funded).

About Home at Last

Home at Last is a service of HAAG. It incorporates Housing Options, Assistance with Care and Housing for the Aged (Commonwealth Department of Social Services Funded), Tenancy and Retirement Housing assistance and support (both funded by Consumer Affairs Victoria). These services are integrated with a range of external housing and aged care agencies to offer a holistic housing, homelessness and care service for older people.

About the Centre for Culture, Ethnicity and Health

CEH aim to improve the health and wellbeing of people from refugee and migrant backgrounds. CEH do this by working with services from the health, community and local government to help improve the way they engage with their clients from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. This is done through providing Training, Resources & information, Social marketing, Project management and Education & support.

Background and project summary

2011 ABS data shows that 85,000 older people rent in the private market in Victoria. This represents an increase of 44 percent since 2006. Along with lower rates of home ownership and reductions in the supply of public housing, the private rental market is becoming the main housing option available for people on low incomes. However, private rental housing is highly insecure, unaffordable and unadaptable for people as they age.

Older renters from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds often experience discrimination and hardship in the private rental market. They also have less access to resources that may help them with housing problems and to find secure, affordable housing. This puts them at significant risk of becoming homeless.

Currently, almost 20 percent of Australia's population aged 50 and above, and 20.1 percent of Australia's population 65 aged and above were born in non-English speaking countries (ABS 2011). In Victoria the proportion of the population aged over 65 born in non-English speaking countries is even greater still, standing at approximately 30 percent (ABS 2011).

As such, it is important that this growing population of older people can access homelessness services, *and that services are equipped to provide an appropriate service response.*

Learnings from the 'Preventing Homelessness in Older CALD Communities' project

The *Preventing Homelessness in Older CALD Communities* project (2015) began the vital process of engaging and informing high need older people in culturally and linguistically diverse communities about how to access housing services, with clear quantitative results. These included a 345% increase in referrals to and from ethno-specific agencies and a 200% increase in the number of clients housed from targeted communities.

Through this process, the Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria (ECCV) and HAAG concluded that the provision of information is but one major facet of the more complete strategy that is required to ensure equitable access to appropriate and affordable housing for older people from migrant and refugee backgrounds. Without knowledge and understanding of the diverse migration histories and cultural values and practices of Australia's multicultural communities, services will not be culturally inclusive and responsive to the complex needs of clients from culturally diverse backgrounds. Without philosophical and structural changes to how these services are delivered, many members of migrant and refugee communities will continue to be alienated and disconnected from housing services and vulnerable to homelessness.

For these reasons, the Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation funded HAAG to deliver the 'A Home for Diversity,' project, in collaboration with the Centre for Culture, Ethnicity and Health. The project uses a consultation process to develop and deliver information and training in culturally responsive practice for generalist housing and homelessness services.

A Need Identified by the Community

Most of the groups consulted as part of the 2015 '*Preventing Homelessness in Older CALD Communities'* project noted that services must have a basic understanding of their culture in order to provide an effective service. The Serbian community reference group noted;

"*People, who come to a new country as refugees in the later phase of their life, find it very difficult to adapt. Services should consider the circumstances of those people affected by war and their ability to adjust to a new way of life*"[1].

Similarly, the Chinese community reference group suggested:

"*We need to help mainstream workers enhance cultural understandings of the housing issues faced by Chinese elderly people. Clients tend to trust those who understand them deeply".* [2]

With better knowledge of people's migration history, cultural values and practices and how these may impact on peoples' housing situation, services can improve their response to people from diverse backgrounds.

---

[1] Serbian Community Reference Group, Meeting number 2, March 2015, Preventing Homelessness in Older CALD Communities Project
[2] Chinese Community Reference Group, Meeting Number 3, March 2015, Preventing Homelessness in Older CALD Communities Project

Project Aims

1. *Housing support workers who work with older people will have a clearer understanding of best practice when working with people from the key communities, and can implement these changes within their organisations.*
2. *People from key communities will receive a more culturally responsive service and will be more willing to use housing and homelessness services.*
3. *The template for the training package can be developed and implemented to assist other mainstream service agencies and high need CALD communities.*

Project Processes

'A Home for Diversity' had three phases:

1. **A developmental phase** where a *Community Reference Group* and a *Housing and Homelessness Reference Group* are consulted
2. **A design phase** where training is designed in collaboration with the Centre for Culture Ethnicity and Health- based on the information garnered from the consultation process
3. **The delivery phase** where the training is delivered to housing workers

Note: This project was not designed as a research project but as significant learnings came from the consultation processes, this project report and its recommendations have published and distributed to relevant parties.

Project Model

The Developmental Phase

Community
Reference Group

Homelessness Sector **Survey**

Service User **Interviews**

Housing and Homelessness Reference Group
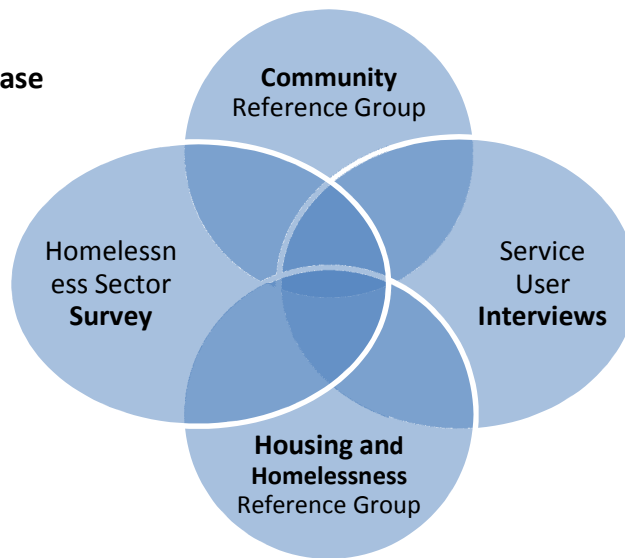
The Design Phase
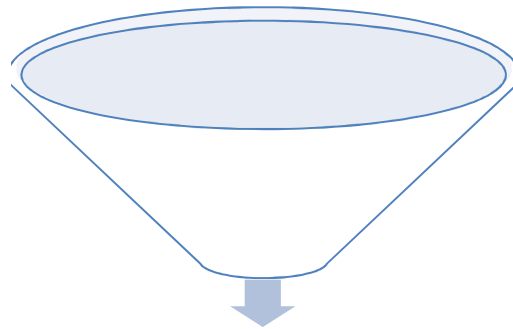
The Delivery Phase

Training Program- Developed snd delivered by the Centre for Culture, Ethnicity and Health

The Developmental Phase

The Developmental phase included meetings with the following groups:

- A Community Reference Group (4 meetings)
- A Housing and Homelessness Reference Group (4 meetings)

Additional information gathering took place as a result of suggestions from the community reference group and Housing and Homelessness Reference Group. These were:

- Service User Interviews (5 interviews took place)
- Barriers to Service Access Survey (89 service providers responded to this survey)

These processes are explained further in the Community Findings and Housing and Homelessness sector findings section of the report.

The Design phase

The Centre for Culture, Ethnicity and Health Capacity building Stream Leader was part of the Housing and Homelessness Reference Group and this allowed for good communication and engagement with the project's objectives. As a result, the design of this training targeted housing worker needs and scenarios and allowed for tailored learning to be delivered to workers and managers.

A number of activities were undertaken to ensure the relevance and quality of this training series:

- · A survey was undertaken to assess the current level of engagement with CALD communities and use of language services.

- · A series of resources were developed with housing specific examples of how the CEH cultural competence framework may be operationalised in the context of the housing sector. The resources were then signed off by members of the Reference Group to ensure their utility for the purpose.

- · Case studies were designed to explore the detail of culturally appropriate service delivery in line with issues raised in the community reference group.

- · Finally, consultation fees that were allocated to the Stream Leader Capacity building were redirected into the training budget to ensure additional sessions could be delivered and include locations in regional areas to support equitable access to the training.

The Delivery phase

Training delivery: Training sessions were arranged by Reference group members in consultation with the Training Coordinator at CEH. 6 sessions have been scheduled and at the time of this report 3 have been delivered. Feedback from the sessions identified that participants found them to be useful and practical and many stated their intention to change their individual practice and/or procedures in their agencies. The following organisations will or have received a training session;

Agency Name	Location
Wesley Mission Victoria	Ringwood
Harrison Community Services	Croydon
Salvation Army Social Housing Service	Sunshine
Combined Regional Session	Sale
Combined Home at Last and Assistance with Care and Housing (ACH) worker session	Melbourne CBD
SalvoCare Eastern	Box Hill

Community Findings

The Community Reference Group

A Home for Diversity worked with two community reference groups. These groups consisted of volunteers and social workers/support workers from the 6 key communities that took part in the 2015 'Preventing Homelessness in Older CALD Communities' project. These communities were: Arabic Speaking, Chinese, Bosnian, Croatian, Serbian and South Asian.

The community reference groups provided feedback on the direction of the project, barriers for members of their communities who are trying to access mainstream services and suggestions about the content of the training package.

Key messages from these meetings formed part of the training package and were also passed onto the Housing and Homelessness Reference Group. These groups met 4 times in total.

Findings from Community Reference Group Meetings

The community reference groups discussed their perception of barriers that are preventing people from their community from accessing mainstream services such as Home at Last. Some key themes emerged from these meetings:

- **Organisations need to actively promote their service within communities**
- **Services need to be aware of stigma and community perceptions**
- **'Word of mouth' is a powerful tool for promoting services**
- **Elder Abuse can stop people acting on their housing issue**
- **Specific communication skills are needed when working with people from CALD backgrounds**

Organisations need to actively promote their service within communities

Discussions at the first community reference group meeting revealed a gap in some communities' knowledge of essential services. Due to a lack of information about services, some communities have become accustomed to finding support within their own community. One group member noted,

"Our people always relied on each other so they will need a lot of convincing that help is available'"[3]

The group noted that this lack of information about services is often because services do not approach specific communities with information. Some noted that services were delivering the information to the wrong people, or leaving it in the wrong place[4]. This information gap means that older people often do not seek help, as one group member described,

---

[3] A Home for Diversity, Community Reference Group Meeting Number 1
[4] Ibid

"There could be a lack of information, but they (older people) don't know what the situation will be if they act, if it will be better or worse than what they have".[5]

Another point noted was that messages about services should be reinforced a number of times. One worker noted:

"Every time you give them (seniors' group members) the brochure they will keep it but they are not ready. I had one client with diabetes, after the third time I visited and talked to them about taking the test (diabetes) she came up to me and said she had taken the test and it was positive. But it took three times."[6]

Group members noted that it is important for services to stay in touch with community groups to build trust over time.

"It is important to keep in touch so that people trust us as it can take a number of times visiting a group before people can trust that we can help."[7]

Services need to be aware of stigma and community perceptions

Some group members noted that in their communities there is stigma around housing issues that prevents older people from speaking out. One group member said,

"They would rather suffer and be part of the family. They will cry to a friend but then she will say 'don't tell anyone'. People offer help but they want to stay where they are. The family as well, the community will say 'how dare you kick them out' but not want to get involved, we need to encourage people to talk about these things. If we did, there would be a different result".[8]

During the third community reference group meeting, some group members noted that people from their communities are reluctant to speak badly about family members in front of others. So they may not disclose important information, or it may take a long time for things to be disclosed. Group members noted that to workers, it may appear that a client is lying or avoiding providing information, but they are simply avoiding speaking negatively about their family.

"In our culture we don't want to talk about it, if they say my son is bad or my daughter is bad they think 'they will kick me out straight away'. They are worried about what their community will think but also what their family will think"[9].

'Word of mouth' is a powerful tool for promoting services

Support workers who were part of the community reference groups noted that word of mouth can be more powerful than other forms of promotion when trying to communicate information about a service to a community.

---

[5] A Home for Diversity, Community Reference Group Meeting Number 1
[6] Ibid
[7] Ibid
[8] Ibid
[9] Ibid

Workers commented that the names of helpful workers 'get around' communities and community members will often ask for a worker, without knowing what service assisted them.

"they don't know the name of other services, they just know the name of the worker. They say "Sally [sic] helped her" but they don't know what the service is called".

Some other services are well-known in the community. Workers from the reference group suggested that less well-known services need to work with the well-known services to get information into the community.

"[Organisation Name] has such a reputation in the community, everyone knows about them so people will come to them for information."[10]

Elder Abuse can stop people acting on their housing issue

Elder abuse influences housing in two ways – as well as potentially leading to homelessness, it also may prevent people from accessing help. Elder abuse is described as the mistreatment of an older person by someone with whom the older person has a relationship of trust such as a family member or friend. Elder abuse can be social, psychological, financial or sexual and involves controlling behaviors or actions which can frighten or intimidate the older person.[11]

HAAG has found that there is often a strong relationship between elder abuse and housing and homelessness issues, especially in communities where older people are more likely to live intergenerationally with their families. There may be additional layers of dependency for older people who have migrated later in life, and who now live with adult children. Migration may also exacerbate intergenerational conflict.

Whilst elder abuse can be a strong driver for homelessness for older people it may also prevent a person from seeking or receiving services. Social abuse in particular may involve a trusted person controlling the social interactions of an older person, including interactions they have with service providers. One group member noted,

"Some children/carers are really controlling and sometimes they won't even let you look at the mother in the eye, they cut you off to make sure that the mum won't open up because they don't want to lose the (carer's) payment. We make sure the daughter goes a bit so we can tell them they can come back."[12]

The above statement is an example of both social and financial abuse. Financial abuse was also noted as an issue of concern for older people in the reference group's communities. One member noted,

"I am working with older people who are getting benefits and the (adult) children are forcing them to go to English classes (so that they receive NewStart payments). I've seen women being taken to the ATM and taking their money out and taking their money."[13]

---

[10]A Home for Diversity, Community Reference Group Meeting Number 1
[11] Seniors Rights Victoria, Retrieved from http://seniorsrights.org.au/your-rights/, 18/07/2016
[12] A Home for Diversity, Community Reference Group Meeting Number 1
[13] Ibid

Financial abuse can make an older person feel that they have no choice other than to continue living with their abusive children and can therefore prevent that person from seeking more preferable and safe living arrangements.

Specific communication skills are needed when working with people from CALD communities

The third community reference group meeting included discussion of the communication skills needed when working with people from the group members' communities. Below is a summary of the advice provided by the community reference groups.

Take the time to build trust:
Some people may be reluctant to speak badly about family members, or discuss family issues in front of others. So they may not disclose important information, or it may take a long time for things to be disclosed. Do not assume that there is no issue just because the client does not disclose it immediately[14].

Make sure a private space is provided:
The reference group mentioned that due to the privacy of family matters and a concern that private matters will be spread amongst the community, it is essential that a private space is provided when speaking to the client[15].

Speak clearly and simply:
When a client speaks limited English, workers should speak clearly, not use acronyms or jargon and be aware of not speaking quickly. The group advised that workers should not use long complicated sentences when speaking to someone with limited English. Instead they can ask simple questions like, "interpreter?" "Language?" or "name?". The group also noted the importance of tone of voice; that even through a person may not understand you, they will be able to tell if you are angry, frustrated or compassionate towards them[16].

Be aware of dialects when asking for an interpreter:
The group discussed the importance of dialects and advised that workers should be aware that a person may ask for a particular language, but may not mention the dialect. When the dialect is wrong, the client may not understand the interpreter at all. The group advised that workers should ask the client for both the language and the dialect that they require[17].

Be clear in communicating housing related information
The group noted that new migrants are often unsure of how the housing system works. Workers should explain things in a simple way and be clear about what makes them eligible or ineligible for housing. The group noted that when people don't know the eligibility criteria, they may avoid telling part of their story as they fear it may disadvantage them. This does not mean they are lying or being deceitful, just that they are doing their best to get help[18].

---

[14] A Home for Diversity, Community Reference Group Meeting Number 3
[15] Ibid
[16] Ibid
[17] Ibid
[18] Ibid

Service User Interviews

Five service users were interviewed as part of the project, each participant completed the interview but one decided not to have her interview included in the report due to concerns over privacy and confidentiality.

Each participant had experienced homelessness or being at risk of homelessness and was from a culturally diverse background. The participants' experiences of homelessness were mostly recent, occurring over the past year or so and some had spanned over 10 years. Experiences of homelessness for interviewees included;
- Moving from private rental to private rental due to being unable to afford the rent
- Moving between family members and friends but having no permanent place to live
- Living with family members where there is family conflict or abuse and being unable to find an alternative place to live

Participants were all over the age of 55.

Key messages from these interviews were passed onto the Centre for Culture, Ethnicity and Health and used to inform the development of the Cultural Competence in Housing Training.

Findings from Service User Interviews

Interview participants were asked a series of questions regarding their experiences of using social and community services during a period of housing crisis or stress. The questions were focused on what made the participant feel "comfortable" or "uncomfortable" when interacting with a service or service provider. These words were chosen specifically to encourage participants to reflect on how the actions of service providers or organisations made them feel at the time.

Participants were asked to focus on their experiences with housing and homelessness services, but some participants also reflected on their experiences with Centrelink and other generalist welfare services. The interview questions are included in this report as Appendix 1.1.

The findings from the interviews can be broken into three categories:
- **Cultural considerations and stigma**
- **Issues relating to the housing and homelessness system**
- **Issues with Housing and Homelessness Services**

Cultural Considerations and stigma

Stigma
Cultural stigma regarding the public or 'outside' discussion of family matters and financial matters was raised by three interview participants as something that made them feel uncomfortable.

"We don't like discussing our family matters outside the home, complaining about our children or showing ourselves as victims" [19]

"Why do workers want to expand on our personal experiences, instead of just listening?" [20]

"A written questionnaire should be designed anticipating the problems faced by seniors so they're not compelled to repeat their bitter experiences- adding insult to injury" [21]

"Ego comes into it as well. In our culture it cannot be that I cannot pay the rent. My ego is bigger than going to ask for help- it cannot be me. Even if you said there is help available then I would still think about it, is there something else I can do myself to pay the rent rather than go ask for help." [22]

"When someone asks me about my financial situation it can be hurtful. When I have to explain about my business and what happened. When I only have $100 in my bank why do I have to go and prove that I am really really broke. It really hurts when I have to talk about my finances." [23]

The need for confidentiality
Interview participants talked about how confidentiality is very important, not only as they did not wish to discuss the above mentioned issues in front of others, but also because they were concerned that the information they provide to workers can get back to the community.

"I don't like it when personal problems are discussed in public, like at Centrelink when they ask you in the line" [24]

"It makes me uncomfortable if a worker shares information from another client who is known to the present client. Like someone else from the community. How can we trust them to keep our secrets?" [25]

"It's hard when there are others around when talking about private matters, they should take you into a private place or cabin" [26]

" I can suggest to meet people in a neutral place like a library or community center so that they have minimum fears that unwanted people would listen to their conversations which stops them sharing their thoughts" [27]

---

[19] Service User Interviews, Participant 1
[20] Service User Interviews, Participant 2
[21] Service User Interviews, Participant 3
[22] Service User Interviews, Participant 2
[23] Service User Interviews, Participant 1
[24] Service User Interviews, Participant 3
[25] Service User Interviews, Participant 2
[26] Service User Interviews, Participant 3
[27] Service User Interviews, Participant 2

"I would feel more comfortable if the problems of financial or family abuse are addressed while speaking on the phone not in person"[28].

Community Education to counter stigma
Suggestions were made about how community education strategies such as using videos or written articles can help to reduce stigma about housing and homelessness issues. One interviewee also discussed having someone speak at an important community event about the issue so that the whole community understands the issue and where to seek help.

"You should show movies or some short videos (of people from particular cultural groups) to show how other people have benefitted from talking or expressing themselves"[29]

"You can provide written articles in their languages to increase their level of comfort talking about their story"[30]

"Have somebody to say a couple of words in their (seniors groups of cultural gatherings) Christmas speech or mother's day or some big event in the community or Easter time when people give for children's hospital. Those people who publically speak for their community tell them that if anyone feels hardship in the community at that moment, after the service please come and talk to me and I can give you a few brochures on where to go. Then more people would listen when everyone is feeling happy and open."[31]

Issues relating to the housing and homelessness system

Housing System Issues
The interviewed participants mentioned a number of issues with the private rental system being unsuitable for people on a low income, as well as issues related to unsuitable emergency housing and long public housing waiting lists.

Issues with Renting
Interview participants who had been renting struggled in to sustain private rental tenancies due to their low income and the lack of affordable housing in Victoria. The median rent for a 1 bedroom flat in Metropolitan Melbourne is $329 a week[32]. This equates to 65% of a single person's Aged Pension (maximum amount, including all possible supplements) and 100% of Newstart with maximum rent assistance for a person who is under 65.

Private rental is also insecure; Tenants can be given a Notice to Vacate, where they must leave the property in 120, 90, 60, 30 or even 14 days.[33].

Interviewees noted their struggles when living in private rental properties;

---

[28] Service User Interviews, Participant 3
[29] Service User Interviews, Participant 2
[30] Ibid
[31] Service User Interviews, Participant 1
[32] Department of Health and Human Services, Victorian Rental Report, March 2016, retrieved from http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0010/967303/Rental-report-March-2016.pdf on 27/07/2016
[33] CAV

"I never felt that I am homeless, but probably I have been homeless for the last 3 years. If I'm struggling to pay my rent- for the last 3 years I wasn't making enough to pay my rent- I was borrowing money from everyone I knew to pay the rent and I was already homeless, I didn't know."[34]

"And when you go the real estate, God forbid you don't have a job or you have a dog- I had to tell the real estate I was working when I wasn't and I didn't tell them about my dog".[35]

"I had to pay 6 months' rent in advance to make sure I got a place, I used all my money, everything I had, otherwise they would not give it to me because there were so many applicants and I didn't have a job. All my money I gave to them to make sure I had somewhere to live."[36]

Public Housing waiting times
Most of the interview participants noted that they had either been told that public housing wait lists were extremely long by housing workers or they themselves had been on the public housing wait list for many years.

It should be noted that these interviewees had applied for public housing before turning 55 years old. After turning 55, if the client meets the eligibility criteria, the wait time for public housing becomes much shorter due to the availability of older persons housing stock.

However, this is not well-known in the sector and as such, clients are often not informed that when they are over 55 affordable housing options are more easily accessible;

"Everything I've heard about- there's 15 years waiting list, 10 years waiting list and I do need help now, I cannot wait."[37]

"So when my eldest son moved out I had to find a small house and then the social worker helped me apply for public housing but she said you have to wait a long time.[38]

"When I asked about my public housing application they said 'no, you are in the bottom (of the wait list) and I said how can I be at the bottom, I've been waiting 10 years, how can I be at the bottom".[39]

One participant noted that, had her worker informed her about her housing options changing when she turned 55, she would have suffered much less stress and anguish about her housing situation;

"I would have wanted somewhere to tell me three years ago, I would have said 'look I am really struggling to pay my rent' and then they would say, 'you are not eligible until you are

---

[34] Service User Interviews, Participant 1
[35] Ibid
[36] Ibid
[37] Ibid
[38] Service User Interviews, Participant 5
[39] Ibid

55' and I would say, ok I'll struggle until I am 55 then I would have hope. I would not have been stressed out to the max and depressed.[40]

"If they would say yes- You are over 55, you have health issues and no money so you are eligible, and it would take one month to one year to get housing. They would say 'you should somehow suffer it out, be positive, its gonna happen, we're not sure when it's going to happen but it's going to happen. Don't get too anxious, it's going to happen you it's just a matter of when'. So that would feel like, 'I wonder how long its going to take' but its actually going to happen. It would save me from getting anxiety attacks."[41]

"Because all that was happening with this housing, I was sliding back into the depression and I knew there was a chance for it to happen again, and if someone told me 'yeah there is housing' then it would have saved me from thinking like that. The whole thing is scary, thinking what's going to happen for me from now until 10 years?"[42]

Unsuitable Emergency Housing Options
There are few emergency housing options available to older people and people who are homeless generally. Many of these are unsuitable and unsafe for older people.

Participants noted that homelessness services tried to help them to find emergency and low cost housing, but the standard of housing available was very low.

"At one place I was given a lot of paperwork for a caravan park, a boarding house, house sharing with gumtree, how to find $100 rent- everywhere I went it was terrible, I could not imagine I could live there. That's what I was given, I was thinking this is all you can get. They would help me get anything but the housing…"[43]

Issues with Housing and Homelessness Services

Older people not identifying with mainstream homelessness services
In 2014-15, the Australian and State and Territory government recurrent expenditure on specialist homelessness services was $707 million to 1500 services, yet there are only two specialist older persons' homelessness services in Australia: Home at Last and a regional service by Wintringham.

Consequently, very few older people are assisted by homelessness services, with only 4.5% of homelessness service clients aged 55-64 and only 2.5% of clients 65 years and over.[44]

---

[40] Service User Interviews, Participant 1
[41] Ibid
[42] Ibid
[43] Ibid
[44] HAAG, At the Crossroads in Retirement, Older People at Risk of Homelessness, 2016, found at
http://www.oldertenants.org.au/publications/crossroads-retirementolder-people-risk-homelessness

One reason for this may be that older people do not feel comfortable at mainstream homelessness services. The interviewees noted that they didn't identify as being "homeless" and that they felt their situations were different to those who were seeking assistance at mainstream services;

"I thought I wouldn't be eligible for help because when I looked around people seemed to be drug addicts or have been homeless for a long time. It didn't seem like it was somewhere I could get help."[45]

"And I still thought that I am not homeless, in my understanding going to these services I thought I am not eligible because I am still not homeless even though I was living at my girlfriend's house."[46]

Feeling locked out
Some interviewees noted feeling "locked out" of services, by security glass, locked doors and front of house staff who would prevent them from seeing the workers they knew. One participant noted;

"The doors were all locked like Fort Knox and I felt like I was a dangerous person".[47]

And another;

"First when I applied they said there was something (housing) for me. He gave me the address and said he would call in 2 weeks. Three months I waited and there was nothing.. I went there and they locked the door and they said "Do you have an appointment? And I said no. I asked them 'is it successful or unsuccessful- if its unsuccessful then I need to know. And then the guy said ok, go home and I will call you. Then I cried. Then he called me and made an appointment with another guy- but only because I cried"[48].

---

[45] Service User Interviews, Participant 1
[46] Service User Interviews, Participant 1
[47] Service User Interviews, Participant 1
[48] Service User Interviews, Participant 5

Housing and Homelessness Sector Findings

The Housing and Homelessness Reference Group

The Housing and Homelessness reference group was made up of Assistance for Care and Housing (ACH- formerly ACHA) workers, Victorian Homelessness Network coordinators, a Centre for Culture, Ethnicity and Health Co Manager and Home at Last housing workers.

Housing and Homelessness Reference Group Meetings

Training Materials
The Housing and Homelessness Reference Group provided some guidance on the development and modification of training materials, such as the re-development of CEH's Cultural Competence Fact Sheets to reflect the needs of the housing sector. Feedback was also provided on the use of case studies and guest speakers at the training sessions.

Supporting the delivery of training
The main function of the group was to provide support around the delivery of the cultural responsiveness training sessions. The group provided advice about which services and regional areas should be approached as hosts for the training sessions and assisted with the practicalities of coordinating a training schedule. The group discussed the costs of the training and how payment for sessions would be managed, subsidized and so on. The group was also charged with promoting the training sessions within their networks and creating interest within the sector.

Project Recommendations
The group provided input into the project report's recommendations. It discussed some of the barriers to service access for CALD clients from the sector's perspective. However many group members believed that they could not represent the views of the sector and as such offered their support in the development and distribution of a survey of housing and homelessness support workers. The survey had 89 responses and its findings have made a significant contribution to the recommendations of this report. The survey results also gave the Centre for Culture, Ethnicity and Health a clearer understanding of the sector's cross cultural practices and areas to focus on in the training sessions.

A Home for Diversity- Barriers to Service Access Survey

At the initial Housing and Homelessness Reference Group meeting, it was suggested that a survey be developed and distributed to Housing and Homelessness workers across the state. The survey was distributed using Survey Monkey and the questions can be found in Appendix 1.2

The survey focused on workers' perceptions of the quality of service received by people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds from their organisation, as well as the workers' understanding of the barriers that may prevent people from CALD backgrounds from accessing their service.

Both qualitative and quantitative data was collected- although fewer qualitative answers were collected. This information informed the content of the Cultural Competence in Housing training and formed the basis of the recommendations made in this report.

Who responded to the Survey?

Survey respondents were workers from the housing homelessness support sector. They can be broken down into the following groups:

ACHA- Assistance with Care and Housing for the Aged	9.59%	7
CCP- Community Connections Program	4.11%	3
Opening Doors- Homelessness Access Point	19.18%	14
Housing (Provider)	9.59%	7
Homelessness Support	54.79%	40
Specialist Access Point- Working with Women, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander People	2.74%	2
Total		**73**

Skipped 16

A total of **89** workers responded to the survey and responses were collected between April and August 2016.

Workers were from both Regional and Metropolitan Victoria:
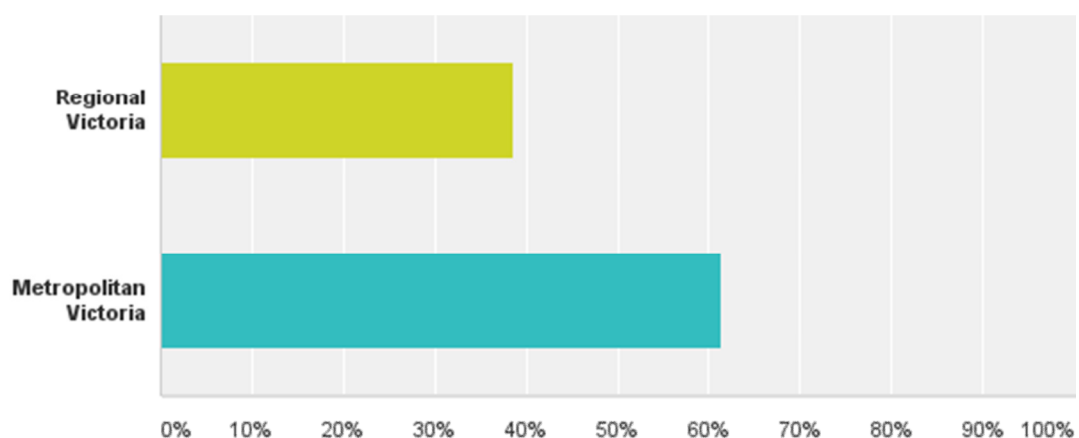
The largest proportion **(25.84%)** of respondents **work with older people**, and others work with families, youth, single adults or a combination of the above.

How was the survey distributed?

Members of the Housing and Homelessness Reference Group were asked to distribute the survey through their networks in April 2016. In the second phase of the project people who registered for training sessions were asked to fill in the survey as part of the registration process (if they hadn't completed it already). The majority of responses were taken from the initial distribution process.

Key findings from the 'Barriers to Service Access' Survey

Interpreters

It was discussed in the Housing and Homelessness Reference group that perhaps one of the barriers to equitable access to services for clients from CALD backgrounds was that interpreters were not being used as frequently as they are required.

As such, a section of the sector survey focused on interpreter use, particularly the level of usage and reasons for not using interpreters when required. The survey also asked about the effectiveness of the interpreter services being provided. The results can be found below;

Question 5: How often do you use interpreters in your work?

The highest proportion of respondents **used interpreters in their work <u>yearly</u> (35.29%),** with 10.29% using interpreters <u>daily</u>.
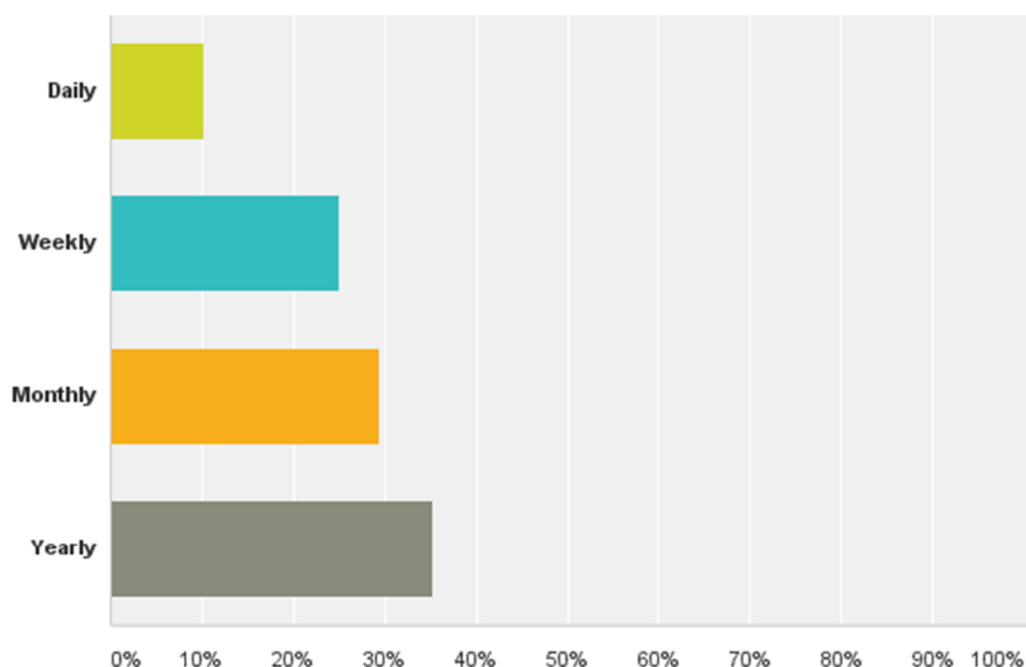
Q6. Have you ever required an interpreter but decided not to use one?

Question 6 asked, **'Have you ever required an interpreter but decided not to use one?'** **24.66%** of respondents replied **yes** they had.

Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	24.66%	18
No	75.34%	55
Total		73

There were 19 written responses about why workers were not using interpreters when required. These can be broken into 5 categories:

1. Client or family member of client refused to accept an interpreter **32%**
2. The worker made other arrangements for interpreting (such as using family or friends or a bi-lingual worker at the organisation) **26%**
3. The worker experienced barriers with the interpreting service **21%**
4. The worker 'got by' without an interpreter (using English) **16%**
5. The worker felt they didn't have time to use an interpreter due to the nature of their job/ service **5%**

Q9: Is the interpreter service you use effective?

In question 9, when asked about the **effectiveness of the interpreter service** that they use, **20.63%** of respondents said that the service was **not effective**, compared to 79.37% who said it was.

Is the interpreter service you use effective?

Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	79.37%	50
No	20.63%	13
Total		63

17 Qualitative responses to why respondents believed the service was not effective can be broken into:

1. Language needed not available at time of call to interpreting service **35%**
2. Inconsistency in quality of the interpreting service provided **18%**
3. The inability to meet client needs within the 15 minute blocks allocated to phone interpreters **18%**
4. Background noise in phone call when interpreter is interpreting **12%**
5. Inappropriate allocation of on-site interpreters (gender different to requested, etc) **5%**
6. Other **12%**

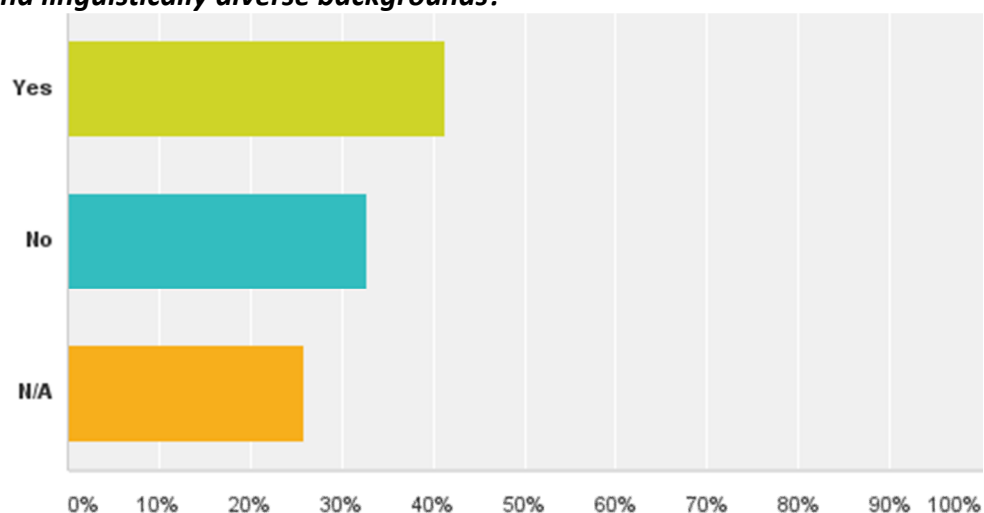# Sourcing Accommodation for people from CALD backgrounds

Feedback from initial Homelessness Reference Group meetings also suggested that there were structural barriers to sourcing accommodation, both emergency and long-term for people from culturally diverse backgrounds.

The second section of the survey focused on whether workers found it more difficult to accommodate CALD clients.

A striking finding of the survey was that **41.38%** of survey respondents said that they found it **more difficult to source emergency accommodation** for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Similarly, **32.76%** of respondents also said that they found it difficult to source **long term** accommodation for people from CALD backgrounds.

Q. 15. Do you find it more difficult to source emergency accommodation for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds?

The 24 written responses to why emergency accommodation was more difficult to source for people from CALD backgrounds can be broken into the following categories:

1. Accommodation is not suitable for the client's cultural needs (eg, is too far from their community, shared gender bathrooms, no space for family members etc) **41%**
2. The housing provider is discriminating against people from CALD backgrounds **25%**
3. Worker does not have time to/ wish to explain accommodation options where an interpreter is required **17%**
4. Housing options are limited for everyone **12%**
5. Other **5%**

Q16: Do you find it more difficult to source long term accommodation for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds?

32.76% of respondents also said that they found it difficult to source **long term** accommodation for people from CALD backgrounds.

Do you find it more difficult to source long term accommodation for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds?

Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	32.76%	19
No	43.10%	25
N/A	24.14%	14
Total		58

The reasons given for this largely matched the reasons given for not being able to source short term accommodation, namely, accommodation is inappropriate, discrimination in the private rental market, finding it more difficult to explain options when an interpreter is required and limited housing options available for all groups.

For this reason, a recommendation of the project has been to conduct a review of discrimination in both the private rental market and the emergency housing sector including Transitional Housing Managers (THMs) and rooming houses.

Questions 18 to 21 asked respondents to recommend changes that could be made either with existing resources or additional resources to make the services they work in more culturally responsive. These suggestions have been included in the recommendations sections of the report.

Recommendations

Recommendations

Recommendations for this report have been made based on a combination of feedback from the Community and Housing and homelessness reference groups as well as the 'A Home for Diversity 'Barriers to Service Access' Survey' and interview participants.

The need to increase access to mainstream services

Many survey respondents noted that a key barrier preventing people from culturally diverse backgrounds from accessing their service has been a lack of connection between their mainstream services and ethno-specific services. Survey respondents and reference group members noted that many CALD clients face barriers to understanding the complex housing system that they feel ill-equipped to assist with.

A number of respondents from mainstream services also noted that they believe clients from CALD backgrounds don't use their service because they are unaware that the service exists. This was also supported by feedback from the project's Community Reference Group. Some suggested solutions were:

- Increased opportunities for mainstream services to network and engage with local ethno-specific services
- Clear liaison points between mainstream agencies and ethno-specific services, which could provide referral pathways from communities to mainstream agencies.
- Community specific support workers imbedded within mainstream agencies, who could provide support to someone with language and cultural barriers to service access.
- More resources allocated to target communities who aren't using services- such as creating language specific resources or delivering community education.

Some regional respondents also noted that there are a lack of ethno-specific services in their region.

As such the following recommendations have been made;

Recommendation 1:

That ethno-specific and multicultural services receive secure and targeted funding so that they can continue to provide pathways for culturally diverse communities to access services.

Recommendation 2:

That programs such as the Commonwealth Home Support Program Specialised Support Service (formerly HACC Access and Support program) be replicated in other sectors so that people from culturally diverse backgrounds have access to a worker who can liaise between their community and mainstream services.

Recommendation 3:

That resources be provided for the translation of written materials and that targeted community education be integrated into services to break down barriers to access and encourage migrant and refugee families to actively access housing and homelessness services.

The need to increase the capacity of Homelessness and Housing Services to respond to people from CALD backgrounds

Qualitative responses from the 'A Home for Diversity 'Barriers to Service Access' Survey' (from questions 18-21) highlighted a number of issues within the housing and homelessness sector that were presenting barriers to service access for people from CALD backgrounds.

It was noted a number of times by survey respondents and reference group members that the 'crisis response' nature of homelessness services, particularly for the 'IAPs' or Initial Assessment Planning workers, meant that time to operate under best practice in cultural competency was limited. Many workers noted 'time needed to use an interpreter' as a key barrier preventing them from responding in a way that they would prefer to respond to a client with language needs.

As a response recommendation 4 has been made;

Recommendation 4:

That housing and homelessness support services receive adequate funding to increase staff numbers so that staff have time to work in a culturally competent manner- including using interpreters when needed and communicating vital information effectively.

Additionally, Cultural Competence training is one way of addressing some of these barriers by highlighting the need to provide an equitable service to all clients, regardless of restrictions and the skills needed provide this service. As such, recommendation 5 has been made;

Recommendation 5:

That the *Cultural Competence in Housing* training, developed through the 'A Home for Diversity' project, be offered to all Housing and Homelessness agencies and programs, and that it is subsidised by the Department of Health and Human Services.

The need to review available interpreting services

As noted in the survey response section of this report, a number of issues with interpreting services were identified by survey respondents. These include:

- Lack of access to interpreters in regional areas- particularly for on-site interpreting
- Lack of interpreters for new and emerging languages or smaller language groups leading to long waiting times for phone interpreting and sometimes no available on-site interpreting

- A lack of compatibility between the need to intervene quickly as part of a crisis response and the need to wait for an interpreter to be available by phone for some language groups
- A lack of consistency in the quality of service provided. Ie, some interpreters work in public places where there is background noise, others have been reported to add their own opinion and advice to the conversation whereas others are very professional

As 21% of survey respondents said that the interpreting service they use is ineffective, the following recommendation has been made;

Recommendation 5:

That a review of the Victorian Interpreting and Translating Service (VITS) be conducted to ensure consistent quality across interpreting services.

New migrants, and more established migrants with limited English language skills, often lack the confidence to contact services without the assistance of others from their community, whether it be family members or ethno-specific services.

Members of the housing and homelessness reference group mentioned that, if clients were able to call with TIS, rather than have to leave their name and number with a service in English and have a staff member call back with VITS, more clients from CALD backgrounds would be able to access their service.

Universal access to the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) would improve service access significantly. TIS allows people who speak languages other than English to call a service through an interpreter. It is free for the caller and the interpreting is charged to the service provider. At the moment most homelessness services cannot be called using TIS.

Recommendation 6:

That the National Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) be available to all government funded services.

The need for government to provide secure, affordable housing

Reference group members, survey respondents, as well as well as the interviewed service users revealed some of the issues regarding the lack of long term housing options for all people who at risk of homelessness, including people from CALD backgrounds.

Between 1996 and 2007 the number of public housing units declined by 23,000, while the population rose by 2.8 million people . The critical change in public housing expenditure occurred between 1990 and 2001 when Commonwealth public housing funds declined by

26 per cent[49]. Since that time there have been gradual reductions in public housing in real terms.

Other than a general lack of supply and long wait times for those who are under 55 or on the 'General Wait Turn' wait list, there are some issues that have a particular impact on people from culturally diverse backgrounds. These were noted by survey respondents as;

- A lack of public housing for larger families
- A lack of 2 bedroom apartments for older people who live with their adult child as a carer (this seems to be more common for people from CALD backgrounds, particularly those from new and emerging communities)
- For refugees settled in regional areas, a lack of affordable housing and low supply of public housing, especially for families
- Lack of information/explanation of the affordable housing system to new migrants

Recommendation 7:

That the Victorian Government increase public housing stock so that waiting times are reduced and the public housing system can serve its intended purpose of providing shelter for those who are most vulnerable, including people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

The need to investigate discrimination in the private rental market

A 2012 Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission report revealed a pattern of real estate agents stereotyping people based on their cultural background, with one survey respondent stating: "someone once told me that people of my nationality are dirty so they would not rent to me"[50] .

The report also notes that culturally diverse renters are less likely to complain about mistreatment by landlords, or maintenance issues[51].

Workers who completed the 'A Home for Diversity 'Barriers to Service Access' Survey' also noted discrimination against people they were trying to assist to find accommodation. 32.76% of respondents said it was more difficult to source long term housing for people from CALD backgrounds. One worker noted,

"Sometimes they (CALD clients) are looking for accommodation i.e share house, private rental only within their ethnic group. There is still a lot of racism within housing, where landlords will not rent to CALD (sic), especially African young people".

Particular areas of discrimination noted were:

- Discrimination in non-public housing types
- Expressed racism - especially by real-estate agents/landlords and discrimination against particular groups

---

[49] *What future for public housing?* AHURI, 2010
[50] VEOHRC 2012, 12
[51] VEOHRC 2014, 9

- Requests for local rental history before providing accommodation– which is not possible for new migrants.

This striking finding highlights the need to investigate and act upon discrimination in the private rental sector.

Recommendation 8:

That the Victorian Government conduct a review of discrimination in the private rental market, especially discrimination faced by people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

There is little research available on discrimination in the emergency housing sector, yet 41.38% of survey respondents said that they found it more difficult to source emergency accommodation for people from culturally diverse backgrounds. Reasons listed were;

- THM (Transitional Housing Managers) 'Unsure about exit plans' and not allocating transitional housing to specific cultural groups because of the belief that CALD clients will be wanting to stay longer and wait for a public housing offer
- Emergency housing options may be unsuitable, unsafe for people who are from a non-English speaking background who may have additional vulnerabilities due to language barriers
- Limited emergency housing options may force people to leave their community and become socially isolated
- Housing providers avoiding using interpreters
- "Community fearful of difference"

For this reason, it is recommended that;

Recommendation 9:

That the review of discrimination in the private rental market also includes a review of Transitional Housing Managers (THMs) and other types of emergency housing such as rooming houses.

Conclusion

The 'A Home for Diversity' project has undertaken to engage stakeholders in housing and homelessness sector and the ethno-specific service sector, in order to create and deliver a training program that will increase the capacity of housing and homelessness workers to work with people from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Through its partnership with HAAG, the Centre for Culture, Ethnicity and Health will have delivered 6 tailored training sessions as part of the project. The outcomes of these sessions will be measured by CEH into the future, but feedback so far has indicated that participants have found the training useful and practical and many stated their intention to change their individual practice and/or procedures in their agencies.

Without knowledge and understanding of the diverse migration histories and cultural values and practices of Australia's multicultural communities, services will not be culturally inclusive and responsive to the complex needs of clients from culturally diverse backgrounds. HAAG believes that this project has gone some way in providing a foundation for structural changes to how services are delivered, so that clients from culturally diverse backgrounds can have more equitable access to housing and homelessness services.

Housing for the Action Group was keen for the important learnings from the project to be shared with other housing services, so that access to housing services for older CALD people could be improved. We hope this information has been valuable for both service providers and relevant government and funding bodies.

References

A Home for Diversity- Barriers to Service Access Survey, Survey Monkey, Results Collated 5th of

August 2016

Chinese Community Reference Group, Meeting Number 3, March 2015, Preventing Homelessness in

Older CALD Communities Project

Community Reference Group, Meeting Number 1, March 2016, A Home for Diversity Project

Community Reference Group, Meeting Number 2, April 2016, A Home for Diversity Project

Community Reference Group, Meeting Number 3, May 2016, A Home for Diversity Project

Department of Health and Human Services, Victorian Rental Report, March 2016, retrieved from

http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0010/967303/Rental-report-March-2016.pdf on

27/07/2016

HAAG, At the Crossroads in Retirement, Older People at Risk of Homelessness, 2016, Found at

http://www.oldertenants.org.au/publications/crossroads-retirementolder-people-risk-homelessness

on 10/08/2016

Seniors Rights Victoria, Retrieved from http://seniorsrights.org.au/your-rights/, 18/07/2016

Serbian Community Reference Group, Meeting number 2, March 2015, Preventing Homelessness in

Older CALD Communities Project

Service User Interviews, Participant 1, April 2016, A Home for Diversity Project

Service User Interviews, Participant 2, April 2016, A Home for Diversity Project

Service User Interviews, Participant 3, March 2016, A Home for Diversity Project

Service User Interviews, Participant 4, March 2016, A Home for Diversity Project

Service User Interviews, Participant 5, May 2016, A Home for Diversity Project

Jacobs Keith, Atkinson, Rowland, Peisker, Val Colic, Berry, Mike and Dalton, Jacobs, Tony, What future for public housing? A critical analysis, AHURI, 2014, 9

Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission, 2012, *Locked Out- Discrimination in Victoria's Private Rental Market*.

Thanks to

Community Reference Group Members

Biljana Trickovic	*Lina Hassan*
Felicita Sivasudasan	*Margaret Yung*
Inderjit Jasal	*Rabia Syed*
Irum Sultana	*Marina Celebic*
Lina Hassan	*Yen Kim*
Senada Ekic	

Housing and Homelessness Reference Group Members

Adrian Terranova	*April Bragg*
Bernice Murphy	*Erin Freyer*
Gabriella Battaglia	*Gillian Keily*
Jan Armstrong	*Keith Hunte*
Melis Cevik	*Tegan Leeder*
Trang Le	

Service User Interview Participants (who wish to remain anonymous)

Those who completed the 'A Home for Diversity-Barriers to Service Access Survey

HAAG and CHP Acknowledge the Contributions of the following services:

VASS VICTORIAN ARABIC SOCIAL SERVICES
الخدمات الاجتماعية العربية في فكتوريا
SERVING A DIVERSE ARABIC COMMUNITY

C1, 1-13 The Gateway,
Broadmeadows VIC 3047
T (03) 9359 2861
F (03) 9359 2899
E mail@vass.org.au
W www.vass.org.au

ABN 19 633 403 991 INCORPORATION NO. A0009173D

Australian Croatian Community Services

Australsko hrvatske društvene usluge

华人社区服务中心
Chinese Community Social Services Centre Inc.

Serbian Social Services and Support Inc.

Victorian Multi Ethnic Slavic Welfare Association Inc.

Serbian Community Association of Australia Inc.

Northern Region Indian Seniors' Association (Vic.) Inc.

Connecting & Culturally Responsive
Indian Care

ISCA
INDIAN SENIOR CITIZENS ASSOCIATION
VICTORIA
FRIENDSHIP & MUTUAL HELP

Appendix 1.1

Background

A home for diversity is a project which aims to train housing and homelessness workers to better work with your community.

The information we gather from your interview will contribute to the housing and homelessness worker training.

Questions

Think about some times when you have used a service, like a housing service.

1. When you walk through the door and speak to reception
   - Is there anything that has made you feel uncomfortable? (you have any examples?)
   - What could make you feel more comfortable?

2. When you spoke directly to a worker (social worker/housing worker)
   - What have workers done in the past that make you feel uncomfortable?
   - What could they do to make you feel more comfortable?

3. When the worker asked you about your personal circumstances
   - Has anything made you feel uncomfortable?
   - What would make you feel more comfortable?

4. When you have called a service on the phone
   -What has made you feel uncomfortable?
   -What would make you feel more comfortable?

5. If you could give a worker any advice about how to work with yourself or someone from your community, what advice would that be?

6. Do you have any advice about how services could make things better for people from Culturally Diverse Backgrounds?(eg. The room/office, resources, training for staff etc)

Appendix 1.2

'A Home for Diversity'

A Home for Diversity' is a collaboration between the Centre for Culture Ethnicity and Health and Housing for the Aged Action Group. The project will develop and deliver training in culturally responsive practice for mainstream housing and homelessness services in regional and metro areas.

We recognize that there are multiple barriers preventing people from culturally diverse backgrounds from accessing housing and homelessness services. Many of these are about the resources that are available to us in the sector.

As such, we want to include the voices of the sector in the development of the training. We can also use the information gathered to lobby funding bodies for change.

We thoroughly appreciate your time in completing this survey so that we can better serve the sector and the community.

1. What program/sector do you currently work in?

Other (please specify)

2. I work predominantly in

3. I work mostly with

Other (please specify)

A Home for Diversity- Barriers to Service Access Survey

ABOUT THE COMMUNITIES YOU WORK WITH

4. Name the top 3 ethnicities of the people who you work with the most? (eg. Anglo-Australian, Chinese, Italian etc.)

1. [   ]

2. [   ]

3. [   ]

5. How often do you use interpreters in your work?

○ Daily

○ Weekly

○ Monthly

○ Yearly

6. Have you ever required an interpreter but decided not to use one?

○ Yes

○ No

7. If you answered yes, what prevented you from using an interpreting service?

[   ]

8. Which interpreting service does your organisation use?

[   ]

9. Is the interpreter service you use effective?

○ Yes

○ No

10. If no, please explain your answer

[   ]

BARRIERS TO ACCESSING SERVICES

11. When a client that doesn't speak English comes into your office, how are they usually assisted by the first point of contact?

☐ An interpreter is called immediately

☐ A bi-lingual worker is attained to speak with the client

☐ Their case worker (if they have one) is called who speaks to them with an interpreter

☐ Written information is given to them in their own language

☐ They are spoken to in English

☐ A friend or family member is used to interpret

☐ Other (please specify)

[_____]

12. How comfortable do you think clients from non-English speaking backgrounds feel at your service?

	Not Comfortable		Reasonably Comfortable		Very Comfortable
Level of Comfort	○	○	○	○	○

13. Please tell us why you chose the above ranking

[_____]

14. Do you find it more difficult to source emergency accommodation for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds?

○ Yes

○ No

○ N/A

15. If you answered yes to question 14, please explain why

[_____]

16. Do you find it more difficult to source long term accommodation for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds?

○ Yes

○ No

○ N/A

17. If you answered yes to question 16, explain why

[   ]

18. What could be done with existing resources that could improve outcomes for people from culturally diverse backgrounds?

[   ]

19. In your opinion, what additional resources would help you better respond to the needs of culturally diverse clients?

[   ]

20. Are there any other barriers that prevent people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds from accessing your service?

[   ]

21. Does your organisation have a strategy in place to enhance the workplace's capacity to work with culturally and linguistically diverse clients?

○ Yes

○ No

○ Don't Know

22. Would you attend a free training about working effectively with culturally and linguistically diverse clients- provided by the Centre for Culture, Ethnicity and Health?

○ Yes

○ No

○ Maybe

23. If yes, please include your email below

[   ]