

ETHNIC COMMUNITIES COUNCIL WA

NEWS

APRIL EDITION



April 2020

Message from the Executive Officer COVID 19



This is an incredibly difficult time for all Australian citizens, and Permanent residents and those on Temporary visas.

The Governments, both Federal and State, have been working to assist the Community and control both a Health and an Economic crisis. To this end, ECCWA has been and will continue working with the other peaks in WA to ensure that all critical strategies take into account the needs of the CaLD community.

Our priority is to ensure that all our members are supported and that their needs are raised and addressed. We will provide support and assistance to our Community members and also provide their members individual support as necessary.

We would like to acknowledge that those members who are service providers are still providing front end services to the community and doing so in very difficult circumstances.

Hence, we would like all our members to continue advising us urgently of any issues you are facing so we can work to raise the issues with relevant Government taskforces to achieve appropriate resolutions. We will continue to provide feedback on issues raised.

In this past month, we have done a number of Media Releases about Covid-19, have been working closely with our National and State counterparts and advocating on the following critical issues. Detailed information is in this Newsletter

- Communication on Coronavirus to be provided in different languages.
- Crisis Support and Emergency Relief for Temporary Visa Holders
- Family and Domestic Violence Support and Counselling
- Impact on increasing Racism around Australia
- Impacts on Mental Health due to Social Isolation

Whilst we have no firm idea as to how long the social isolation is likely to be, we do know that the impacts will have long lasting effects and hence it is imperative that we work together and that our Communities know that they have a means to express their views through ECCWA.

Communication and COVID-19 -

There has been a lot of information produced by the Department of Home Affairs in various languages and we have ensured that these have been provided to all our members.

In addition, these have been placed on the ECCWA website - www.eccwa.org.au
ECCWA has dedicated special pages on our website for Coronavirus and also placed links that will allow you to access updated current information from the WA and Federal Governments, WACOSS, and other relevant agencies.

We have placed the link to the SBS portal dedicated to Coronavirus which has information in 63 different languages.

ECCWA will continue to send updated and current information as it is received to all members.

Crisis Support and Emergency Relief for Temporary Visa Holders

With the closure of several business sectors and the need for severe social isolation the Federal governments stimulus packages have provided support for Australian Citizens and Permanent residents but there has as yet not been any financial support offered to those in Australia on Temporary Work Visas, Student Visas, Spousal visas etc.
This has been of major concern as many of these visa holders cannot return to their home country due to border closures and have no form of financial support having lost their jobs. Hence ECCWA, in conjunction with its National body FECCA and other ECC's across the nation and the Harmony Alliance have continued to lobby for the inclusion of temporary migrants in the National Economic Relief assistance packages. Therefore, it was pleasing to note that in recent days we have been advised that:

Waiting periods for newly arrived migrants to access Centrelink payments have temporarily been waived, meaning that they can access various safety net payments including the COVID-19 supplement. We have been advised through the Harmony Alliance that the Office for Women have also advised that anyone who is unable to pay their bills or is at imminent risk of not being able to pay their bills can access Emergency Relief regardless of their visa status.

More information on this program is available here

<https://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/communities-and-vulnerable-people/programs-services/emergency-relief>

List of providers for Emergency Relief is also available on the DSS Service

- Directory, at www.serviceproviders.dss.gov.au

In addition, ECCWA has, jointly with Indian Society of WA and Multicultural Services Centre of WA, launched the COVID-19 Appeal to assist this cohort.

WA State Government \$159 million Crisis Relief Fund was announced by the Premier on Monday 30 th and on 31 st March 2020 a Peaks meeting with Lotterywest was held where we were informed of the following (thanks to CEWA for this well documented synopsis)

Lotterywest

Key points included:

\$20M will be allocated to Crisis and Emergency Relief Support and the focus will be on three areas:

1. Increases in demand to support vulnerable people
2. New processes eg, vehicle for this new process or additional resources
3. Supporting collaboration across the sector eg peaks.

\$14M in total will be for event cancellations and perhaps for some loss of fundraising revenue.

\$25M will be for resilience of arts and sporting bodies and their events.

Up to \$100M will be for Covid-19 issues for the broader community (there weren't specifics on this and it may depend on lottery revenue etc).

The application process for this funding will be different to current processes and more streamlined. Turnaround times will be a lot quicker with the Lotterywest board to meet as required. Funding will still need the Minister's approval.

Family and Domestic Violence Support and Counselling

ECCWA has been working closely with the WCFDVS and also the FDV taskforce workgroups to ensure decisions made also take into account the needs of the Multicultural Community and the needs of the Multicultural FDV Outreach Services that are still providing services to the community.

We have been working very closely, with Ishar, Multicultural Women's Health, Asetts, Ethnic Advocacy Support Team and the Multicultural Women's Advocacy Service to ensure that collaboration occurs ensuring support for clients and the staff working in these frontline areas. We expect significant increases in work here and it is imperative that staff are supported and where necessary increased resources may be required.

In addition, the impact of temporary visas in this area with Women escaping DV having no income and if not in a refuge having no access to income has led to work being done to obtain quarantined ER for this cohort. This is a work in progress and we are also looking at what other housing may be available to assist women who may not be able to access a refuge.

Impact on increasing Racism around Australia

ECCWA has been very concerned about the increased incidents of racism occurring in WA and across the country and our President Mr Suresh Rajan has been actively highlighting our concerns to the Government. Many media releases have been done and are included in this Newsletter including the WAMNNews article of an incident that culminated in a statement by the WA Government.

This is an issue which we must all keep a very close eye on as it has the ability to cause significant disrepair to social cohesion.

Impacts on Mental Health due to Social Isolation.

Mental Health issues are very significant at this time and we are concerned about what is available to support the Multicultural Community. Whilst we are aware money has been provided to Beyond Blue etc we are not aware of what resources are available for the CaLD community. As an example, we need to focus on the following groups and need specific feedback from members.

We need to address the impacts on those:

- Who are already receiving counselling and may not now be able to.
- Refugees and victims of torture and trauma
- Victims of FDV
- Persons with disabilities.

Vivienne Pillay
Executive Officer

NEWS BULLETIN: disclaimer statement

Dear Members,

ECCWA makes no warranty for the accuracy of any non-ECCWA material distributed via this communication. All questions should be directed to the organisations from which the material originated.

ECCWA News Bulletin Items are drawn from a diverse range of sources, not least of which are materials from our stakeholder organisations, for the interest of all our readers. We publish the content as it is sent. Apart from items that are sourced from ECCWA and FECCA, material included not necessarily reflect the views of the ECCWA, nor should its inclusion be seen necessarily to constitute an endorsement. We welcome your input for our monthly round-up of news and information



Tourist and short stay visa holders

Email from Liberal Senator of Western Australia in regards to short stay visa holders staying in Australia

Dear Ramdas

Thank you for your email in relation to people in Australia who are on a variety of visitor and short stay visas.

I can assure you that the Australian Government is acutely aware of the issues and challenges people on short term visa are facing in the current environment.

The Australian Government is working to ensure that everyone in Australia, regardless of their background, is kept safe from the potential spread of coronavirus.

All current visa holders who wish to remain in Australia beyond their current visa expiry date MUST contact the Department of Home Affairs and apply for a further visa.

Visa holders who currently hold a visa which includes a 'No Further Stay' condition (visa categories 8503, 8534 and 8535) must first apply for a waiver of the 'No further Stay' condition.

I understand waivers are being granted in many cases to prevent people who wish to remain in Australia being obstructed by the current coronavirus travel restrictions.

Once a waiver of the 'No further Stay' condition has been granted, the visa holder must then apply for a further visa.

People are encouraged to only submit waiver applications where their current visa will expire within the next 2 months.

It is important that all visa holders understand and adhere to the conditions of their visa and I encourage those wishing to remain in Australia to maintain contact with the Department to avoid breaching their visa conditions.

I expect to have some further news in the near future. At this stage it is very important that all current visa holders who wish to remain in Australia beyond their current visa expiry date contact the Department of Home Affairs and apply for a further visa.

This is a very safe first step that all current visa holders can and must take. I am available to meet at any time to discuss this further.

I would be very interested in understanding from you how you will be communicating this information to multicultural communities across WA.

With kind regards

Dean Smith

Message from Community Sector Partnership Team

Department of Communities



Hi all

We understand that there have been some questions about how decisions coming from National Cabinet are implemented and interpreted in Western Australia.

In our State, the decisions are given effect via State of Emergency declarations from WA Police and the Department of Health. Those declarations can be found [here](#).

Some of you have asked about mass gathering rules. Under the relevant declaration, those rules do not apply to any gathering at an office building that is necessary for the normal business of the premises.

This would apply to all sector office buildings. Others have asked about the closure of certain places of business, worship and entertainment. There may be a small impact for some of you from these three declarations, which include closure of community, recreation or youth centres other than to host essential voluntary or public services such as food banks or homelessness services.

There have also been questions about the regional border restrictions that will take effect from midnight tonight. The currently available guidance is provided below (the formal declaration has not yet been made). For the community services sector, the key point is that people travelling to work, both paid and unpaid, are exempted.

We suggest that if any of your staff are travelling to or for work across the regional boundaries outlined below, they carry a hard copy or electronic letter from you as their employer. We have attached a template letter for you to put on your own letterhead and use.

We know that this is not a simple or perfect regulatory regime. We are working closely with the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, WA Police and other agencies to improve communication of various measures, and ensure that the impact on the community services sector is actively considered in any directions that are made.

Kind regards,

Michelle Andrews and Deb Zanella
Community Sector Partnership Team
Department of Communities

Border controls – community service sector exemptions.

The WA Government will introduce further restrictions on travel within Western Australia from 11:59pm Tuesday, 31 March 2020 to assist in reducing the spread of COVID-19. After this time, most Western Australians will not be allowed to travel outside their designated region. Western Australian intrastate travel is defined as movement through the boundaries of the regions of Western Australia.

These regions are:

·Perth and Peel (due to their proximity, the Perth and Peel regions will form one region)

South West

Great Southern

Goldfields-Esperance

Mid-West

Wheatbelt

Gascoyne

Pilbara

Kimberley.

Police have the power to enforce these restrictions, and fines of up to \$50,000 can be issued.

Exemptions will apply for:

- people travelling to work, both paid and unpaid
- attending medical appointments
- transporting freight
- where necessary to attend school or an educational institution
- those who do not have access to groceries or supplies within their region
- approved compassionate grounds.
-

Access to designated regions, including the Kimberley (including the entire Shire of Ngaanyatjarraku, and parts of the Shire of East Pilbara encompassing the communities of Jigalong, Martu homeland communities and Kiwirrkurra) have additional stronger restrictions in place. This is to help curb the spread of COVID-19 into our very vulnerable communities, which could have catastrophic consequences.

Letter template for intrastate travel

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Under the Prohibition on Regional Travel Directions in place from 31 March 2020, please accept this letter as authority for [Name] of [Organisation] to travel between [region A] and [region B] for the purpose of [either “fulfilling the duties of their employment and then returning to their principal place of residence” or “providing human services (which are defined as essential services) and then returning to their principal place of residence”].

This authority covers the following period: [dates]

Should you need further clarification, please call me on [phone number].

With thanks

[Signature]

[Name]

[Title]

[Organisation]

[Date]

WAMN - Covid19 Racism Banners Sparking Outrage Among Multicultural Leaders

You may have drove pass them this morning but didn't realize it, six racist banners were displayed around Perth in what appears to be targeting the Chinese community as Covid19 crisis hits WA.

Controversial sentences including the following. "To Stop A Runny Nose, Keep The Borders Close.", "From China, with Ruv. No Masks, No Gloves", "All This For A Succulent Chinese Meal", "Globalism Did This. Pneumonia World Order", and "China Lied, People Died, No Place Left To Hide."

WAMN News Perth understands that these offensive banners were found at following locations this morning:

Lawley Street overpass, Yokine.

Arnisdale Road/Mitchell Freeway over pass, Girrawheen.

Gentilli Way/Kwinana Freeway over pass, Salter Point.

Goodwood Parade, Burswood.

Scarborough Beach Road/Mitchell Freeway Overpass (Eastbound), Glendalough.

Britannia Road/Lake Monger overpass, Mitchell Freeway, Mount Hawthorne.

In an exclusive interview this afternoon, The Ethnic Communities Council WA President slammed the stunt, saying Covid19 is not an excuse to push for blatant racism.

He also says what happened today threatens harmony and engenders violence within the community.

"If this is what we are seeing here in Perth, it is disgraceful and highlights what we have been saying. Covid19 cannot be used as an excuse for blatant racism and vilification. It threatens the harmony we have spent years fighting for," he said.

"It is not funny. It is inappropriate because it belittles one group at the expense of others. It causes harm and engenders violence in the community."

Mr Rajan says he has no problem with people raising issues regarding the Chinese Government, suggesting concerned citizens should raise the matter with their local MPs instead.

The Ethnic Communities Council WA have renewed calls for the State Government to take a definitive stand against hate speech, and emphasizing that there are already strong penalties to stop racism.

Actions should be taken by WA Police to stamp out these acts of hatred.

“I have no issue with people having or taking issue with the Chinese government. However this is spilling out into action against individuals who are going about their daily activities. That is when it becomes unacceptable. If they wish to protest the Chinese Government do it through their local MP,” he continued.

“We have always felt that it was imperative that governments move early on this matter and issue a strong statement to show that this was unacceptable.”

“Our fear was that it would escalate into something like this. And sadly it has. It’s a very fine veneer of harmony in this country. It does not take much to shatter that.” Mr Rajan warned.

The McGowan Government Condemns The Signs

The McGowan Government has responded to the incident swiftly by condemning these signs, urging people to “stop and think” about the hurt and pain it will cause to the community.

A spokesman from the state government says the messages are “deplorable” and has “no place” in Western Australia.

“The McGowan Government condemns these signs and urges those responsible to stop and think about the hurt and pain they would be causing members of our community who come from an overseas background,” the spokesman said.

“These divisive messages are deplorable at any time, but especially now as Western Australia deals with the COVID-19 pandemic.”

“Western Australia is a proudly multicultural state that has embraced unity, which is needed now more than ever. These signs have no place here.” - WAMN News

Council warns against racist incidents

The Ethnic Communities Council of WA, President, Suresh Rajan today called on the Government to make some strong public statements to condemn the racist incidents that have been occurring in recent days here in Western Australia.

“We have seen an alarming rise in the incidence of racial vilification (particularly against those of Asiatic origin) and racism generally throughout our community in the last few weeks. At a time when there are considerable job losses and increased uncertainty about the economic future, people are looking to blame others for their misfortunes. We understand their motivation but do not condone these acts in any way” said Mr Rajan.

Mr Rajan added: “Let me cite some examples of the racism outbreaks that we have seen in recent times:

- People who appear to be Asian in origin being abused at supermarkets
- A Malaysian student being denied rental accommodation
- The Chinese being blamed for the virus
- The Chinese restaurants seeing a marked drop off in patronage
- Students at some schools being mocked as “Coronas” in the playground. My son has witnessed this personally.
- My niece (of Indian ancestry) and another young girl being abused on a train in Melbourne, The abuse was about them “being the problem that led the abuser to have to take his children out of school!”
- Snide remarks being made to people of general “Asian” appearance
- Talk back hosts allowing these comments to go to air without regard for the community outcomes.
- WA Police Engagement Unit have also posted comments indicating a rise in racist graffiti incidents that they are dealing with at present”

“Whilst all these incidents are reprehensible, we also condemn the actions of the WA One Nation leader, Mr Colin Tincknell, who retweeted comments that perpetuated stereotypes that had been created by Ms Pauline Hanson in speeches she had made previously. The comments will not be reproduced here but people can view them on Mr Tincknell’s page. Additionally when I criticised him on Twitter, his followers have turned on me and made comments that were equally nasty and hurtful towards me. As a person who experienced the worst of the racism that was perpetuated and promulgated by Jack Van Tongeren in the early days, this period is very reminiscent of that era” said Mr Rajan.

ECCWA calls on the Minister and Premier to roundly condemn these acts of racism and vilification as a matter of urgency. For media enquiries please contact Suresh Rajan on 0403276960

Council expresses concerns about racist materials found in parts of Perth

The Ethnic Communities Council of WA (ECCWA) has expressed grave concerns about the finding of racist material in parts of Perth this week.

Council President Suresh Rajan said today “This takes us back to the days of that urban terrorist, Jack van Tongeren, when he ran a campaign of fear and hatred targeting the CaLD communities. The reality, even then, was that we knew the KKK was in existence here in WA and we expressed those views to police and authorities. As a result of considerable work on our part with former Premier Geoff Gallop we were able to effect changes to the Criminal Code to make the Racial Vilification provisions the toughest in Australia. It would appear that we are now seeing considerable emboldening of the racists again. Much of the blame for that emboldening has been as a result of the extraordinarily inappropriate language used by our members of Parliament and others in leadership positions.”

The story as run on the Perth Now website said the following:

“Racist signs including swastikas have been found in public parks across Belmont and Rivervale, just months after police requested information for similar disturbing material. Among the words scribbled over DVDS and pieces of cardboard were the captions “Kill em all” and “Hang all poxy scum”. WA Police said it was unclear if there was any content on the DVDS that was race-related or if they were just used to share the racial messages. Similar signs have been found in the suburbs since 2018. The most recent haul was identified in September last year when cardboard sheets were found with letters of the American white supremacist hate group the Ku Klux Klan.”

Suresh Rajan added “It is interesting that these messages have arisen a few days before the start of Harmony week and the UN Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. It certainly follows a pattern of behaviour we have seen in the past wherein these messages appear usually at a time when economic uncertainty rises and the likelihood of unemployment looms as a possibility. These feed into the fear that we could face job losses. This time we can also speculate that some of the racism fears that we have warned about have risen around the Coronavirus and related issues as well. We are also very concerned about the continuation of the Anti-Semitic messages that are being perpetrated. This must stop. As a council we have been warning about these possibilities for a few weeks now. We call on the Premier and Ministers to take strong positions on this and publicly condemn these actions.”

For media enquiries please contact Suresh Rajan on 0403 276 960 #COVID19 #Coronavirus #Racism #Vilification

Council reiterates calls for calm and caution in relations to COVID 19

The Ethnic Communities Council of WA (ECCWA) has again today called for calm to be exercised over issues relating to the outbreak of the Coronavirus/COVID19.

ECCWA President Suresh Rajan said today "I take this opportunity to remind media outlets of their obligations to maintain some level of harmony concurrent with their responsibilities to inform the general public of issues. There are a variety of media outlets that are pushing the COVID 19 virus issue really hard. Whilst we appreciate the issue of informing the public of the dangers posed by the virus, we urge these organisations to remind people that this is not an opportunity for them to perpetrate their racial hatred and vilification against anyone they perceive to present a "danger of infection".

Dr Andrew Miller from the AMA recently tweeted about the issue and has been quite clear in his comments: "Don't panic, don't shake hands or kiss, don't stockpile too much, don't be racist. Do fluvax late March, do call ahead to GP if sick, do have a plan if school/work is disrupted, do reassure kids. Govt - telehealth item now pls".

Suresh Rajan said "Note the "don't be racist" comment. What the media doesn't appear to understand is that people like us in the advocacy space have to pick up the effects of the racism generated from their alarmist rubbish. Here are some other matters that have been raised on Twitter: "My (Eurasian) daughter was racially abused coming home from school this afternoon after she sneezed on the train. A couple of well-dressed older white Aus. on the north shore line in Sydney decided to tell her she was a disease carrying Chinese. This is no longer a joke." "Chinese born female teacher left classroom in tears after bullied by students about corona To protect themselves from virus, students yell "Corona, Corona, Corona" at top of lungs when they pass Asian students".

This morning on talkback radio a lady of Vietnamese origin indicated that she had been vilified by someone at a store when she was purchasing a product. The racist epithets that came from the abuser were vile and completely unacceptable in our society.

"It doesn't take much to bring out the basest, most vile aspects of some people's attitudes to others. Currently the media is working hard to stoke those fires" said Suresh Rajan

We remind everyone of their need to quell racist fires if at all possible.

ECCWA will take all calls relating to these issues on 92275322 or via email at admin@eccwa.org.au

For media enquiries please contact Suresh Rajan on 0403 276 960 #COVID19 #Coronavirus #Racism #Vilification

2019-2020 MEMBERSHIP

Our membership subscription for the 2019-2020 financial year is open.

If you would like to renew your membership or sign up as a new member, please print and fill in the form in the next page and email it to www.admin@eccwa.org.au.

Membership for organisations is just \$33, and \$22 for individuals. If you would like to find out more information, please call (08) 92275322

We look forward to working with you and for you this upcoming year.

Here are some of our members





Ethnic Communities Council of Western Australia (Inc.)

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E-mail admin@eccwa.org.au Web www.eccwa.org.au ABN 91 163 351 869

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/ RENEWAL FOR 2019-20

NAME OF THE ASSOCIATION	
Postal Address	
Contact No. Phone	Email
Facsimile No.	Website
Approximate Membership of Your Association	



OFFICE BEARERS OF THE ASSOCIATION

President	Contact No.
Email	Facsimile
Secretary	Contact No.
Email	Facsimile
Treasurer	Contact No.
Email	Facsimile

NOMINATION OF DELEGATES OF THE ETHNIC COMMUNITIES COUNCIL OF WA (INC.)

Delegate No.1	Contact No.	email
Delegate No.2	Contact No.	email

ENDORSEMENT OF DELEGATES BY PRESIDENT (OR CHAIR)

I hereby declare that the delegates nominated above have been duly authorized to act and vote on behalf of the Association named above in Section 1 under 'Applicant' and will actively participate in the activities of the Ethnic Communities Council of WA(Inc.) when called upon.

Date	Signature
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Note: A change of nominated delegate can be made at any time under Section 4 of the ECCWA Constitution and the President of the Association can do this notifying ECCWA via email/fax or mail.

PAYMENT of ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION

YOUR CHOICE OF PAYMENT METHOD CASH, POSTAL ORDER OR CHEQUE OR ELECTRONIC TRANSFER Make your Postal Order or Cheque payable to the Ethnic Communities Council of WA Inc. Post or present it to 20 View St. North Perth WA. 6000. Please do not send Cash through the postal system. Bank: Bendigo Bank, 31 Fitzgerald St. N. Perth BSB 633-000 Acc. No. 156354797	YOUR TAX INVOICE Invoice Date: (Date of Application) Invoice No. DESCRIPTION: Annual Subscription of Membership to the Ethnic Communities Council of WA (Inc.) for the Financial year.....and..... Subscription FEE \$ 30.00 GST \$ 3.00 Total \$ 33.00 amended 23 rd August 2003
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1. PAYMENT AUTHORITY MUST BE SIGNED BY A DULY AUTHORISED OFFICER OF THE ASSOCIATION

<input type="checkbox"/> Cash	<input type="checkbox"/> Money Order	<input type="checkbox"/> Cheque	<input type="checkbox"/> Electronic Transfer
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OFFICE USE ONLY

Payment Method Funds received & reconciled (Yes/ No)

Receipt No. Date

Date sent before the Management Committee