



Australian Government

Office of the Aged Care Commissioner

Multicultural Aged Care Services Directory 2009

Launch

ECCV

26 August 2009

Welcome

Sam Afra, Chair ECCV

Minister Lisa Neville

Ross Barnett, Director ECCV,

Marion Lau, Chair ECCV Aged Care Committee

Friends all.

Thank you for the invitation to be here today, and for the opportunity to say a few words.

You will have heard of the importance of this resource in assisting older people from CALD communities in accessing information and services as they age. I have only a few moments and thought I would speak to you on another great benefit of this directory.

Social isolation is a problem for all age groups, and especially in the ageing. It is exacerbated by the lack of transport, loss of friendships, failing health and mobility, and falling levels of engagement through activity.

The inability to communicate in English increases the rate of social isolation and the cost to the quality of the ageing experience.

Our elders are an at risk group – our CALD elders more so.

Now, let's adopt a positive perspective.

The research data on ageing that has emerged in the last 15 years has identified some key factors common to those who enjoy a quality of life in their later years.

One of those key factors is to be engaged – through activity and through relationships. Sigmund Freud said that the fundamentals of human existence are love and work – and I use either Freud's 'love and work' or friends and activity as labels for the two categories of engagement.

Let's look at *human contact* or engagement. Scientists have identified the existence of 'psycho-social' pathways to health. They acknowledge that they can't explain how those pathways work, they only know that they do.

Psycho-social pathways to health mean that having human contact increases your health – not just mental or emotional wellbeing, but your physical health as well.

So, being connected to the world through people is critical to ongoing health.

The second aspect about engagement, or being connected, that science has determined is a critical factor in later life is *activity* – having a reason to get out of bed in the morning.

The research data shows that productive activity, rather than simply activity, brings greater health benefits. So, going down to the senior's centre as a volunteer will be better for you than simply going down to attend, just as helping out at your

grandchild's school fair will be better for you than simply attending. However, the key is to be connected with the outside world through activity.

For almost 40% of Melbourne's elders (and a little less for the rest of the State's elders), being connected is a challenge because of language and culture but it is nevertheless vital to the health and wellbeing of this group.

Enter ECCV and the guide. This resource cannot be underestimated. It is a tool for so many, to assist them in staying engaged, or connected, through 'love and work', friends and activity, through all of their years.

It is a tool for health, wellbeing and quality of life.

Congratulations to all who have contributed. I acknowledge the funding support of the Victorian Government in its production.

To ECCV and all of the community and cultural groups associated with this work, I wish you well as you distribute this tool across the CALD communities and their elders across the State, assisting them to stay connected as they age, for their own health and sense of vitality, and so the rest of the world does not miss out on all they have to contribute as elders and pillars of our families, our communities, and our State.