



FECCA launches landmark project to boost participation of CALD women on Boards

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The Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA) is excited to be undertaking a project with funding from the federal government as announced by Ms Julie Collins, Minister for the Status of Women, to boost the participation of culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) women on Boards and in decision-making positions.

The Australian Government's *Gender Balance on Australian Government Boards* report for 2010–2011 demonstrated that 35.3 per cent of participants on Australian Government Boards were women. While welcoming this news of increased female participation on Boards, FECCA is aware anecdotally from its own networks that participation of CALD women on Boards and in decision-making positions is much lower, especially in the public sector.

“We know from our own engagement with CALD women that they are under-represented in high level positions, but no publication exists to support this awareness with concrete data,” commented Voula Messimeri, FECCA Honorary President. “For the first time in Australia, this project will address the current lack of information around CALD women’s participation on Boards and in decision-making positions.”

“Immigrant and refugee women face multiple barriers to equal participation in the workforce and the wider community,” explained Eugenia Grammatikakis, FECCA Senior Deputy Chair. “Alongside Australian-born women, they can experience discrimination based on gender, and alongside their male family and community members, they can experience discrimination based on cultural, religious and linguistic biases.”

“Further, we are also aware that in addition to immigrant and refugee women, CALD women who were born in Australia also remain underrepresented on Boards and in decision-making positions. This project will address these important issues and promote CALD women’s participation in high-level positions which will assist both the women themselves and the organisations they serve” Eugenia added.

“We welcome the Australian Government’s commitment to utilise the findings of this important project once completed in order to implement initiatives and policies to improve CALD women’s participation on boards. We believe that this will help to maximise the use of their diverse skills for the benefit of all Australians, while helping to achieve greater equity for this significant proportion of the Australian population.” concluded Ms Messimeri.

Media Comments: For further information please contact Voula Messimeri (0414 532 529) or Eugenia Grammatikakis (0448 701 850).