

17/09/2018

Ms. Cathy McGowan AO MP
117 Murphy Street
Wangaratta VIC 3677

Dear Ms. McGowan,

On behalf of the Board of the Albury-Wodonga Ethnic Communities Council (AWECC), I'd like to thank you for your ongoing commitment in representing and championing the needs of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) residents of Indi.

As you know, AWECC's role is to represent the interests of residents from migrant, refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds. Our core purpose is to work alongside our members to enhance social and economic inclusion, access and capacity of multicultural communities.

I am sending this letter to alert you of some growing anxiety about federal politics that we are observing amongst our members, especially considering recent political instability and leadership changes within government. AWECC is concerned by the race-baiting by some members of parliament and the increasing inclination to undermine the interests, needs and civic freedoms of people from migrant, refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds.

Our members are of course concerned by local issues that affect them. However, they are also concerned by broader social issues, such as recent discourse about 'African gangs', proposed changes to citizenship eligibility, and proposed cuts to the nations migrant intake. Furthermore, our members are also concerned about the ongoing 'illegalisation' of asylum seekers and recognised refugees in Australia's offshore detention centres and the long-term health impacts of children in detention (as recently reported by the [Refugee Council of Australia](#)).

In the interests of preserving social cohesion in Indi, we ask that the concerns and needs of our members and ethnic communities remains a priority, as you negotiate with Australia's new Prime Minister, the Hon. Scott Morrison, and indeed the future government. AWECC is proud of the Border and North East's strong migrant history and takes our role of representing local migrant and refugee communities seriously. Again, thank you for your continued support and we welcome the opportunity to discuss the concerns of our members with you.

Sincerely,



Sue Portors
Chairperson
AWECC Inc.