CALD Seniors Ageing in Australia

Solutions Focus Community Forums 2014 and Consultative Workshop
Key Strategies

A community engagement project conducted by the Blue Care Multicultural Service team across Logan, Ipswich and Gold Coast areas.

Version 2
28/07/2015
Revision History

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<tr>
<th>Version</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Description of Change</th>
<th>Author</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>20/01/2015</td>
<td>Initial report based on forum responses</td>
<td>Mercedes Sepulveda</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>Updated with feedback from consultative workshop held in June 2015.</td>
<td>Mercedes Sepulveda</td>
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Approval

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<th>Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>Cathy Thomas</td>
<td>Blue Care Director of Services – South East</td>
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<td>28/7/15</td>
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Acronyms and Definitions

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<tr>
<th>Terms</th>
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<td>CALD</td>
<td>Culturally and Linguistically Diverse</td>
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Acknowledgement

The Blue Care Multicultural Service appreciates the valuable contributions made by community members from the following communities:

- Ethiopian
- Chinese
- Fijian Indian
- Bosnian
- Middle Eastern
- Indian
- Spanish Speaking
- Pilipino
- Samoan
- Austrian
- Hungarian
- Tongan
1. Introduction

The purpose of the Solutions Focus Community Forums project was to listen and document culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) community members’ solutions to their concerns about ageing in Australia. The Blue Care Multicultural Service team believes in the potential of people. Therefore, the input of CALD community members in the national CALD strategy implementation process alongside with the Aged Care Reform is paramount.

Blue Care’s Multicultural Service is sharing and presenting the collected outcomes and proposed solutions to the aged care sector and agencies with an expectation that government, funding bodies and relevant stakeholders will be able to consider CALD community voices when developing service initiatives.

The Multicultural Service team is committed to continuously supporting aged care services to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate and responsive services to CALD community members. Blue Care’s Multicultural Service supports and encourages working in partnership with other service providers to integrate planning, delivery and evaluation to maximise outcomes in a culturally diverse community. The Multicultural Service also contributes to the improvement of CALD community members’ understanding of community care services, how they can be accessed and how individuals can actively participate in care decisions. CALD community engagement and advocacy are part of Blue Care’s service model and objectives for the Multicultural Service team.

A consultative workshop was conducted in June 2015 building on the recommendations from the solutions focus forums. Consequently, an identified set of strategies were proposed and represent the initial phases in the progression towards realising the project report’s recommendations.

2. Methodology

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) older persons and their communities were invited to engage in a number of CALD specific Solutions Focus Community Forums. Dynamic focus groups were conducted to discuss solutions and strategies to address their concerns around ageing in Australia.

The Solutions Focus Community Forums included key stakeholders, such as older person and/or representatives from individual CALD communities, to discuss their ideas on solutions to either individual and/or community concerns. Basic principles of focus group methodology were applied in the process including problem solving techniques that focused on group interaction as an integral part of the method (Robinson N., 1999).

Male and female participants aged between 40-75+ years, representing twelve different countries of origin, were engaged in face-to-face group interview settings. Semi-structured questions were asked and participants had the opportunity to reflect on the questions asked by the Multicultural Service Advisor (facilitator). It was expected that in this group environment, participants would have the opportunity to hear other people’s experiences and responses, which would allow additional comments to be made to enrich participants’ contribution to the forum (Robinson, 1999).
The main objective of using this method was to obtain accurate qualitative data from people within the target audience; those over 65 years of age and classified as an 'older person' by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. The forums sought to find out opinions on a range of specific issues and within a social context. It was expected that participants would consider their own views on ageing as well as that of other members of the forums when formulating their opinions and solutions. The flexibility of a qualitative method can add insight and greater understanding by participants expressing solutions to the complexity of CALD people ageing in Australia.

The Multicultural Service Team facilitated the forums together with the assistance of relevant community members. Twelve community forums were conducted with participants from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds - Tongan, Chinese, Spanish Speaking, Middle-Eastern, Indian, Bosnian, Fijian Indian, Ethiopian, Hungarian, Austrian, Pilipino and Samoan backgrounds.

The following guiding questions were used:

1. What do you see as the solution to the things that affect you or your community while ageing?
2. How realistic do you think your solution is?
3. What strategies can you think of?

### 3. Analysis of Findings

#### 3.1. Discussion

The diversity of participants in terms of age, gender, cultural and professional background enriched the level of discussions while addressing the questions. Although participants represented twelve different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, common concerns in relation to ageing in Australia were identified. These related to:

- information and advice
- service access
- grand parenting and child care
- intergenerational conflict
- communication/English language
- lack of culturally appropriate service provision
- access to culturally appropriate food as a fundamental individual need
- access to transport, social isolation, safety concerns, impact of the Aged Care Reform in terms of fees, housing, advocacy, education, capability and self-determination (the power of making free choices unconstrained by external agencies) of older persons (detailed information in Attachment A).
3.2 Findings

Access to timely and accurate information, advice and advocacy in the light of language and cultural barriers has been a shared theme by many CALD seniors and their communities. It was suggested that seniors’ information hubs be created in central locations. The hubs would be a way to overcome barriers and information gaps, enabling service providers and CALD seniors/communities to remain connected. A hub could also facilitate assisted access to the ‘My Aged Care’ website, which could benefit from improved pathways to additional information/tips for CALD seniors in their own languages. Various agencies, amongst them QADA and COTA could assist in this face-to-face information provision in the proposed hubs.

The government and service providers are seen as sharing both the responsibility and opportunity to enrich their services by engaging, training, employing and utilising a workforce drawn from CALD communities. This would ensure that their clients’ needs were addressed. Employing bilingual/bicultural aged care workers and training CALD community members in supporting seniors with information, language support and individual advocacy, would improve access to a complex aged care system.

Reviewing the Aged Care training curriculum and length of practicum/placements was seen as important to ensure the development of robust and realistic employment opportunities of a CALD aged care workforce. Specific CALD focused scholarships could also be considered to increase the skill base in specialist areas such as aged care, allied health, nutrition, disability and child care. Participants identified the employment of CALD chefs as a solution to the problematic food provision situation, particularly in aged care residences and Meals on Wheels.

Other solutions included English language tuition for CALD seniors and access to bilingual staff and/or CALD community members to facilitate cost-free cross cultural communication between seniors and service providers.

Many CALD seniors feel they still have much to contribute to the community and are able to offer their skills, knowledge, language, services and products to the Australian market place. With available assistance to understand and navigate the Australian system, they can see themselves setting up businesses and social enterprises.

Caring for grandchildren is often seen as a cultural obligation by a number of CALD communities. Many seniors lack the traditional support from their own community in to fill these roles in Australia. Participants discussed the need for developing culturally appropriate projects which could support grandparents in their caring roles, whether they are primary carers or day carers, to assist their own children. Grandparent workshops and support groups could easily develop out of partnerships.

Individual CALD communities seem more than prepared to develop adequate support structures to support their grandparents and children, including developing CALD specific day-care models within their own communities. However, timely assistance is required to obtain information, funding possibilities and partnership options, such as with child day care centres or schools. CALD grandparents could be included in projects to enhance culturally safe environments to benefit both young and old.
4. Analysis of Solutions

Question 1: What do you see as the solution to the things that affect you or your community while ageing?

Solutions suggested by individual CALD community members participating in the forums were based on significant issues, many of which seniors shared across cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Other concerns more prevalent in only some cultural communities.

The suggested solutions to address their concerns were not seen by the participants as the sole responsibility of any individual agent. Solutions provided by participants encouraged:

- active pursuit of innovative, mutually beneficial relationships with direct dialogue between service providers
- identifying relationships within the CALD communities and faith organisations that contribute to improving the ageing experience in Australia
- partnership between CALD communities and their faith organisations and aged care providers to assist in identifying and meeting the needs of CALD seniors
- CALD seniors themselves remaining active, and involved in contributing in faith and to community life, while feeling assured their needs will be met by culturally appropriate support systems.

Participants believe their own community could ‘step up’ if assisted by service providers with the provision culturally sensitive services, accessible information and transport. CALD communities and faith organisations working together would bring more realistic, sustainable solutions, increase understanding and cultural safety of CALD aged persons, an environment in which cultural values are acknowledged and respected.

Question 2: How realistic do you think your solution is?

The majority of communities believed their suggestions were realistic, with many responses to this question quantifying what would be required to ensure suggestions were realistic. The need for CALD communities to form partnerships with relevant service providers was proposed by many communities.

Many respondents felt their community had the will and the ability to provide the solutions to their ageing needs but required additional support to get started. For example, while funding exists, the community needs timely information, guidance and support to successfully complete the application processes.

It was repeatedly stated that community and aged care services currently aim to meet the identified needs of CALD communities; however, services are often not experienced in culturally specific needs and are therefore not accessible to CALD seniors. With ‘good will’ however, respondents felt that services would be able to develop culturally appropriate responses to their communities’ identified needs. For example, the provision for culturally appropriate food was seen as a realistic objective, but required services to be willing to explore these options.
CALD communities identified Churches and other faith institutions as playing an increasingly important role in shaping peoples’ experience in aging in Australia. They could be involved in providing not only emotional support, but also practical and social support structures in partnership with other agencies to respond to seniors’ needs. Therefore, community engagement was viewed as an empowering pathway to provide sustainable solutions. Participants suggested that service providers, particularly in aged care, need to increase the diversity of their workforce (including volunteers), and focus on educating their staff to gain cultural expertise to ensure cultural safety. Additionally, communities are aware of staff from their own cultural backgrounds already employed in the aged and community care sector, and feel their involvement in culturally appropriate responses would enable the success of any strategies service providers implement.

Only a few solutions identified by community members were seen to be either partly realistic or not realistic at all. The reasons were mainly related to the lack of access to funding in organisations or community groups, and the need for alternative funding sources, such as financial responses from private business and the “need to win the lotto”. Another issue identified as a barrier to suggested solutions is the geographical spread of elderly community members from specific cultural groups. This is a challenge for both the community and services to provide culturally specific responses to social isolation that are timely and affordable.

The majority of the CALD communities consulted identified common issues and offered a variety of strategies for solutions. The communities provided creative ideas and also indicated their willingness to participate in the implementation of these strategies.

While some solutions require funding allocation, CALD communities indicated their preparedness to develop partnerships with mainstream services with the aim of assuring low cost, affordable and beneficial holistic outcomes for all parties.

**Question 3: What strategies can you think of?**

The following common themes were identified for strategies to remove cultural and language barriers and improve access and quality of services to the CALD individuals and communities. These were:

1. To increase cultural responsiveness of service delivery
2. To increase partnership opportunities for CALD Communities

**Theme 1: To Increase cultural responsiveness of service delivery:**

By recruiting bilingual/bicultural staff and volunteers and seeking to utilise their skills and cultural knowledge, cultural and language barriers could be reduced and access to services increased. Bilingual/bicultural staff and volunteers can act as a conduit between aged care facilities and the CALD communities for community engagement, sharing information and contributing meaningfully towards improving culturally responsive service delivery. For example:

- culturally appropriate food services
- assisting with language skills for information
- translating aged care related information into community languages for ethnic newsletters
- engaging in cultural exchanges between aged care services and CALD communities
- assisting in the implementation of CALD Community Visiting Schemes at residential and community levels.
It was also recommended that a scholarship program in aged care be established for individuals from CALD communities, in particular for CALD dieticians and allied health professionals.

**Theme 2: To increase partnership opportunities for CALD communities:**

Moving beyond the provision of conventional information, partnerships are seen by many participants as an effective strategy to improve access to services and to reduce social isolation mentioned by the majority of CALD communities members consulted. Partnering with mainstream services to effectively and efficiently make use of existing resources which are underutilised was particularly emphasised. Some other suggestions included CALD managed respite days with participants collected from various residential areas using available aged care service facilities/vehicles.

Many CALD grandparents are culturally obligated to be involved in raising their grandchildren to support their own children’s circumstances. The solutions suggested focused on working in partnership with community care service providers, educational institutions and CALD communities to provide support to grandparents caring for children.

Another suggested way to increase partnership opportunities with CALD communities was to establish a “Seniors Hub” to provide information and advice about aged care and community services available.

The participants envisioned many of the partnership strategies could be realistically implemented with a ‘cultural shift by refocusing services in a way that supports and encourages reciprocal benefits for service providers and the CALD communities’. It was expressed that this process would further empower CALD communities – increasing ownership and control of their own endeavours while ageing in a foreign country. The responsibilities would be shared among the participants, individual groups, aged care providers, and community services in pursuit of inclusive services for CALD communities.

**5. Recommendations**

The following recommendations are based on the solutions and strategies presented by participants and are not in a particular order:

1. Developing support mechanisms for CALD seniors such as a ‘Seniors Information Hub’ with face-to-face contact so language/literacy/cultural barriers can be overcome.
2. Developing appropriate workshops and social activities for grandparents to connect with other grandparents. Additional activities include making advise/counselling options available to deal with family/intergenerational conflict and providing access to childcare/family activities for grandparents and children. Participants believe the CALD community would be able to support those strategies with some guidance.
3. Established Aged Care Service providers to share their resources (premises, transport, venues) with CALD community groups so they can adequately support their seniors to run community programs addressing isolation, access and equity issues. Consequently, activities for seniors could be offered on weekends, evenings focussing particularly on single, isolated and vulnerable seniors.
4. Established and emerging Aged Care services to work effectively to become a culturally responsive service that encourages and values cultural difference. Services should explore engagement of bilingual/bicultural staff and/or volunteers, provide culturally appropriate food, explore co-locating CALD seniors from specific cultural backgrounds together both in respite and residential facilities, and consider cultural and personal traditions and rituals.

6. Consultative Workshop

Following the forum outcomes, a consultative workshop was conducted in June 2015. This event involved representatives from service providers and seniors from CALD backgrounds, most of whom had attended the previous focus groups. The consultative workshop commenced with an address by the Chair of the Federation of Ethnic Communities of Australia (FECCA), who formally endorsed the Forum Report.

This interactive workshop aimed to identify a set of strategies which if initiated would represent the initial phases in the implementation of above recommendations. Three main strategies were developed on this occasion based on a set of principles. The following aims to provide both summary and analysis of the strategies.

6.1. Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Underpinning Principles</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
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<tr>
<td>1 Engagement of mainstream as well as CALD specialist services</td>
<td>CALD seniors will at times choose mainstream services that therefore need to be culturally responsive.</td>
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<td>CALD seniors will also at times choose CALD specialist services that need to be a part of rather than separate to other services</td>
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<td>2 Enhance existing services and programs before establishing new initiatives</td>
<td>Service development needs to focus on existing strengths as well as the adoption of new initiatives. Services need to be well networked to ensure service entry pathways for CALD seniors are clear and easy to understand.</td>
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<td>3 Expand, foster and develop partnerships between and amongst service providers and CALD communities</td>
<td>The majority of aged care information and service provision is generic in design, delivered by mainstream services and not well targeted at CALD seniors and their communities.</td>
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<td>Development of services for CALD seniors, needs to be adaptive, collaborative and coordinated to ensure the sharing and use of resources are effective and efficient.</td>
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Underpinning Principles | Rationale
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4 | **Recognize the capacity of CALD seniors to actively contribute to the design, development and delivery of programs and policies**

CALD seniors want to continue to be authors of their own lives.

CALD seniors have significant capacity to be active participants in the evolution of the services that they patronise.

5 | **Recognition that language, food and other cultural practices are both a barrier and gateway to participation by CALD seniors**

The traditional customs and behaviours of CALD seniors often return and strengthen with age.

CALD seniors will remain empowered, active and socially connected in their communities if their cultural practices are valued.

### 6.2. Strategies

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<th>Key Initial Strategies</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
<th>Potential Components</th>
<th>Potential Key Stakeholders</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Strategy 1</strong> Establishment of a national network of place based information and activity hubs for CALD seniors</td>
<td>Information hubs were a key recommendation arising from the 2014 focus groups. The focus groups also recommended that established aged care service providers should share their resources (premises, transport, venues etc.) with CALD community groups so they can adequately support their seniors to run community programs addressing isolation, access and equity issues. Whilst the value of information resources such as existence the Australian Government’s web portal, <em>My Aged Care Gateway</em>, was</td>
<td><strong>Service information and referral</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Local service and resource directory development/maintenance</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Organised social activities and outings for specific and mixed cultural groups</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Health and well-being information and activities</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Data collection and social research</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Bilingual and bicultural staff and volunteers</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Weekend and extended hours of opening</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Use and up-skilling of CALD elders/leaders and bicultural staff to assist with information</strong></td>
<td><strong>Community centres</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Mainstream aged care services</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Multicultural services</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>HACC funded services</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Universities</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Department of Social Security (My Aged Care web portal)</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Other federal state and local government agencies</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Key Initial Strategies</td>
<td>Rationale</td>
<td>Potential Components</td>
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<td>acknowledged, many older people seek face to face contact. The hubs could address the need for social connectivity as well as information and referrals. Such hubs could be easily prototyped initially in a small number of metropolitan and regional communities before being evaluated, refined and expanded across the country as a larger coordinated network</td>
<td>dissemination</td>
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<td>Strategy 2</td>
<td>Support for grandparents in CALD communities was a key recommendation arising from the earlier focus groups. CALD grandparents often have a traditional and involved role in child rearing. CALD grandparents are often highly motivated and well placed to contribute to community initiatives Supported grandparent activities such as playgroups can provide a medium for peer support, social connection, and community volunteering in addition to child</td>
<td>Multicultural workshops for grandparents, social support groups, intergenerational social activities and grandparent playgroups Development and sharing of program manuals and other associated resources</td>
<td>Playgroup Associations Early childhood services and peak bodies Child and Youth services Family and Community organisations</td>
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<td><strong>Strategy 3</strong>&lt;br&gt;Establishment of a national clearinghouse to share, promote and advocate for best practice in service delivery for CALD seniors</td>
<td>Culturally responsive service delivery in established and emerging aged care services was identified as an ongoing significant gap and subsequently a key recommendation arising from the focus groups. Whilst comparatively more resource intensive to implement than the other two key initial strategies, a national clearing house is seen as a highly effective strategy for achieving systemic change.</td>
<td>Sharing of best practice service models&lt;br&gt;Research of literature reviews&lt;br&gt;International and national trend monitoring and reporting&lt;br&gt;Advocacy and input into government policy and program development</td>
<td>Other relevant clearinghouses&lt;br&gt;FECCA&lt;br&gt;Centre for Cultural Diversity in Ageing (PICSC Network)&lt;br&gt;Other peak bodies&lt;br&gt;Service providers&lt;br&gt;Consumer advocacy groups</td>
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7. Conclusion

Blue Care’s Multicultural Service team is strongly committed to continuously building aged care providers’ capacity to provide culturally and linguistically responsive services to CALD community members. This service encourages and supports the contributions CALD community members are able to make to improve policy, service planning, evaluation and access to culturally responsive services.

Twelve separate solution focussed community forums gathered CALD seniors and key persons and/or representatives from various CALD communities for the purpose of listening to and documenting proposed solutions to concerns affecting seniors while ageing in Australia. The documented outcomes highlight that many concerns raised and solutions recommended are shared across cultures. The solutions envisaged by the CALD communities are not seen as the sole responsibility of service providers, but a shared responsibility that can lead to constructive, sustainable partnerships between service providers and individual CALD communities.

The discussion from the forum identified a number of shared themes, which have resulted in four recommendations. The need for face-to-face, accurate information, advice, and advocacy and referrals could be realised with a ‘Seniors Information Hub’. CALD grandparents struggle to cope with helping to raise their grandchildren and partnerships between service providers and CALD communities can support their seniors with projects addressing the issues. Resource sharing by aged care service providers with the community was discussed time and time again, with a vision of partnerships empowering the CALD communities to respond to their own seniors’ culturally specific needs.

It was also recommended that the aged care sector undergoes a ‘cultural shift’, by becoming ‘smarter’ in their endeavour to become culturally responsive. From revisiting aged care education curriculum to reflect the need for cultural competency, to engaging bilingual/bicultural staff and volunteers to utilise their abilities in the care of CALD seniors, and co-locating CALD clients with others of similar or same language background to reduce isolation and depression. Culturally adequate food provision was another major theme that will remain a major decision reason for CALD seniors choosing to access a service or not.

While most service providers in the aged care sector are determined to provide linguistic and culturally responsive services to an increasingly diverse ageing population in a consumer directive care and person centred care environment, it is recommended that the proposed solutions by the participating CALD communities could assist service providers to achieve cultural responsive service delivery.

To progress the solution focused recommendations, a subsequent consultative workshop developed three main strategies based on a set of principles: establishing a national network of information and activity hubs for CALD seniors, developing resources with the support of CALD grandparents, and establishing a national clearing house to share, promote and advocate for best practice in service delivery to CALD seniors.

In presenting these strategies, the Blue Care Multicultural Service recognises the significant leadership in this area demonstrated by FECCA following the release of the National Ageing and Aged Care Strategy for People from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds in 2012. Furthermore the Blue Care Multicultural Service is hopeful that key stakeholders within the aged care and multicultural sectors will find these strategies a pragmatic tool to form the basis of collaborations and partnerships that add value to the lives of CALD seniors across Australia.
8. References

ABS Census of population and housing (2011)

Robinson N (1999) *Journal of Advance Nursing* 29(4) 905-913 The Use of focus group methodology – with selected examples from sexual health research
ATTACHMENTS