

**Jewish Care Victoria Inc. – Submission****“Productivity Commission Issues Paper – Caring for Older Australians”**

Jewish Care Victoria Inc. is a not-for-profit organisation which provides a variety of community, disability, social justice and aged care services (both residential and community care) to children, youth, families and older persons within the guidance of Jewish orthodox observance.

This paper will provide a response to two specific issues identified within the scope of the Productivity Commission review. In an effort to ensure that the Productivity Commission has a clear understanding of the Jewish Community we have provided a brief overview of the Victorian Jewish Community’s population demographics which supports the recommendations of access to services for culturally and linguistically diverse communities (2.1) and workforce requirements (3).

**Population Demographics – Our Community:**

There are an estimated 60,080 Jewish people living within Victoria who live predominately within three Local Government Areas (LGA) – Glen Eira, Stonnington and Port Phillip (inclusive of the following suburbs - Caulfield, North Caulfield, South Caulfield, St Kilda East, Prahran, Windsor, South Yarra, Toorak, Armadale, Malvern, Malvern East, Glen Iris, Kooyong, Albert Park, Middle Park, Balaclava, Elwood, Port Melbourne, Garden City, Beacon Cove, Ripponlea, South Melbourne, St Kilda, and St Kilda South & West). 74% of the Jewish community resides within these LGAs presenting 16% of the total population for these three LGAs.

The statistics indicate that a total of 19.2% of the Jewish community are 65+ yrs compared to 13.7% of the total Victorian population. Additionally, from a culturally and linguistically diverse perspective a total of 67.9% of the total Victorian Jewish community aged 65+ yrs are from non-English speaking countries.

**Access to Services for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities (CALD):**

From the statistical information above, it is clear that the provision of aged services to the Victorian Jewish community has various unique challenges, nevertheless for the purposes of this submission we have focussed on three (3) areas of concern:

- Provision of interpreting services;
- Provision of services to Holocaust Survivors/Victims of Genocide; and
- Provision of services provided to Holocaust Survivor via Claim Conference funding.

טוֹב  
chesed  
kindness

משפחה  
mishpacha  
family

דֶּרֶךְ אֶרֶץ  
derech eretz  
respect

צְדָקָה  
tzedakah  
charity

Jewish Care (Victoria) Inc  
619 St Kilda Road  
Melbourne Victoria 3004

PO Box 6156  
St Kilda Road Central  
Victoria 8008

ABN 78 345 431 247  
ARN A0040705X

Telephone (03) 8517 5999  
Facsimile (03) 8517 5778  
info@jewishcare.org.au  
www.jewishcare.org.au

## **Interpreting Services:**

Across Jewish Care Victoria 18% of clients and residents require assistance from an interpreter in their daily lives. The dominate language spoken by Jewish Care clients/residents is currently Russian.

In an effort to provide an effective and responsive service to clients/residents and families there is a need to be able to access multi lingual staff and/or interpreting resources in a timely and cost effective manner. Currently we have 45% of our staff who work in services for older people who are bilingual and 25% of these staff are Russian speaking.

Even though these available resources are used to good affect to meet client/resident needs, there is still significant room for improvement. Barriers currently experienced in relation to access of interpreting assistance given the resources currently available include:

- Availability of bilingual staff across all shifts/services;
- Skill set of bilingual staff limits suitability for interpreting for certain discussions;
- Client confidentiality;
- Use of support staff as interpreters can result in perceptions of trust and transparency specifically for clients/residents from the Former Soviet Union (FSU);
- Use of families/friends can be problematic for a raft of reasons and can result in inaccurate translations; and
- Cost, accessibility and timeliness to phone interpreting services i.e. TIS/HACC can be prohibitive given there is no additional funding through the current ACFI instrument.

It must be noted that these barriers are not only experienced by this organisation but by all organisations that currently provide services to persons from a CALD community across the aged and community care environment.

## **Recommendation for Consideration:**

1. Increase access to subsidised interpreting services (Interpreter and Translation Services) through a central pool of funds that can be accessed by any aged care provider to provide for the use of language and interpreting services;
2. That the Commission recommend that bilingual staff be paid an allowance for the additional skills they bring to the workforce; and
3. Adjust the ACFI tool to assist Providers that service CALD communities to employee interpreters across the 7 days between the hours of 9am -7pm in addition to support staff.

## **Services to Holocaust Survivors/Victims of Genocide:**

There are an estimated 8,000 Holocaust Survivors in Victoria with 1,900 of these survivors accessing services from Jewish Care Victoria on an annual basis. The average aged of a Holocaust Survivor is between 86-95 yrs with 42% of Jewish Care's clients/residents being Holocaust Survivors.

There is research available which supports Holocaust Survivors/victims of genocide and of wars (veterans) which identifies that post traumatic stress symptoms continue to be experienced throughout a person's life and specifically these symptoms can often only be treated through supporting the persons when the symptoms present.

Given the current research available, persons who have a diagnosis of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder are extremely susceptible to experiencing symptoms related to their diagnosis, which can impact significantly on their ability to carry out activities of daily living. Whilst counselling services are available, often it is the support of the person who is present at the time when the symptoms present, who is best able to respond to the persons needs in order to decrease the prevailing impact of the symptoms.

## **Recommendation for Consideration:**

1. The Aged Care Act 1997 definition of "Special Needs Groups" is amended to include "persons who are Holocaust Survivors or Victims of Genocide"; and
2. The Aged Care Funding Instrument (ACFI) is adjusted to provide funding for persons who have a diagnosis of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder to ensure appropriate emotional and psychological support is afforded.

## **Provision of Services Provided To Holocaust Survivor Via Claim Conference Funding:**

Jewish Care receives funding from the Claims Conference, an organisation based in New York that distributes funds to organisations worldwide to support services and programs for Holocaust Survivors. The funding Jewish Care receives enables us to support Holocaust Survivors with services such as home and personal care, respite care, meals, transport, allied health therapies, socialisation and emergency assistance. Claims Conference funding enables Jewish Care to provide assistance to over 1,000 Holocaust Survivors each year, and over 30,000 hours of service.

This funding has been essential to maintain existing service provision to Holocaust Survivors. The demand for assistance however, exceeds the funds currently available and this is reflected in the disproportionate of

aged Jewish Victorians against the general aged population. In addition, the funds available via Claim Conference continue to decrease each year and at this stage, it is unclear how much funding will be available to Jewish Care in 2011/2012. Unless additional funding is secured, Jewish Care will be unable to continue to provide the same level of services currently provided with Claims Conference funding. If this is to occur then this reduction in available resources will place more pressure on the aged care system to provide the short fall in community and residential services to Holocaust Survivors.

**Recommendation for Consideration:**

1. Review current regional planning ratios across aged and community care as the current formula is not grounded in sound statistical evidence particularly in areas where there is a high concentration of Jewish people. This issue is clearly identified given the significant support services provided to Holocaust Survivors via Claim conferencing funds.