



December 2019

To whom it may concern,

The Centre for Culture, Ethnicity and Health (CEH) is a national organisation that provides specialist information, training and support on cultural diversity and wellbeing.

Our clients are service professionals and organisations who are committed to providing a culturally appropriate and high quality of care. We offer practical support and training to help them improve outcomes for culturally diverse clients and communities. Importantly, we engage and partner directly with multiple ethnic communities to improve their health and wellbeing.

CEH welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the Parliament of Victoria's Inquiry into Gender Responsive Budgeting and we thank GenVic for bringing it to our attention.

As a leader in culturally competent health development and training, CEH envisions an Australia where all have equitable access to health and care. We recognise the fundamental link between a harmonious community and a healthy one and hence strive to build a society where cultural, linguistic and social factors act as enablers rather than barriers to health and wellbeing.

Gender responsive budgeting (GRB) is a tool for responsible financial management that ensures the Victorian economy is serving and benefiting everyone. However, our organisation is acutely aware that the implementation of such tools often exclude women who experience intersectional marginalisation for issues such as being Indigenous, living with a disability, or- in the case of the women that we work with- are migrants or refugees. If GRB is to be effective in advancing the rights of women, we believe that it must not leave any woman behind.

CEH would like to acknowledge the many organisations who have been able to make a submission to this Inquiry and emphatically support their work and expertise. Without detracting from their efforts, we would also note that few organisations who focus on culturally and linguistically diverse women have been able to take part in this process. This is of particular importance because we know from our experience, that migrant and refugee women often endure disproportionately higher discrimination and other barriers to accessing government-funded services such as healthcare, education, and the police. We highly recommend resources be committed to enable service organisations such as ours to participate Victorian Government's Gender responsive budgeting.

CEH's ability to contribute to this Inquiry is also limited by the little research and consultation focused on the disparity between migrant women and others in health, education, justice and housing. This is despite the clear barriers created by many common experiences shared by migrant women including:

- Medicare ineligibility
- Migrating from places with limited health education and different health beliefs
- Little orientation to the Australian Health System
- Lack of access to culturally sensitive and appropriate services
- Absence of specifically targeted strategies

We believe that GRB has the potential to be highly effective in addressing many of these challenges, but without the data focussed on these areas, we are concerned that this opportunity will be missed.

CEH is well positioned to contribute to this discussion. With appropriate resourcing, our organisation is prepared to harness the lived experience of the communities we work with to make government mechanisms such as GRB as beneficial for everybody in the community as possible.

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