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INITIATIVES FOR WOMEN IN NEED
(IWIn)

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To
The Secretary
Department of Health, Australian Government
Canberra, ACT

Date: 12 May 2017

Reference: Initiatives for Women in Need (IWIn) submission to the Department of Health:
National Ageing and Aged Care Strategy for People from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Backgrounds – Review, May 2017

Dear Secretary

On behalf of Initiatives for Women in Need (IWIn), I welcome the opportunity to provide a submission into the Commonwealth Government's Submission on the *National Ageing and Aged Care Strategy for People from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Backgrounds* (the CALD Aged Care Strategy).

Initiatives for Women in Need (IWIn) is an Indo-Australian non-profit organisation based in the Australian Capital Territory, working to empower socially and economically disadvantaged and vulnerable women and children, particularly coming from South Asian migrant communities in Australia. IWIn also supports activities to elevate the socio-economic status of underprivileged women and children in developing countries, particularly in India.

Our submission summarises the discussions of eleven women from various multicultural backgrounds on the CALD Aged Care Strategy at a focus group that was convened on 6 May 2017 in Canberra, ACT. Although most participants acknowledged that people from CALD backgrounds today face reduced barriers in accessing aged care services than previously, they expressed several concerns about the aged care sector's preparedness to meet the needs of older people from CALD backgrounds and their communities. These include the need to address language and communication barriers; improve training to provide culturally appropriate services; consider new strategies for engaging community volunteers; and increase support for carers.

IWIn believes that the needs of people from CALD backgrounds and their communities need to continue to be addressed holistically at all levels of society. Providing inclusive and appropriate aged care should not just be the responsibility of government but also of the private sector and communities. Collaborative and innovative partnerships between private providers, communities and the government should be considered to assist in the delivery of gap-filling and inclusive services and structures that support older people, their families and carers.

IWIn is also of the view that aged care issues in the CALD migrant community have implications for migrant women and their families at large in terms of carers' options to have work-life balance. IWIn is aware of the complexities surrounding family violence against elderly family members and carer women in migrant and culturally and linguistically diverse populations in Australia, recognising that these issues can have a range of physical and mental health, financial, and social impacts on individuals and communities that can hinder them from achieving their full potential in the Australian society. It also affects the general wellbeing of the

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elderly people and their women carers, due to existing barriers ranging from language, cultural, financial to legal barriers.

We acknowledge and support the DoH efforts in addressing some of these issues through this *National Ageing and Aged Care Strategy for People from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Backgrounds – Review May 2017*.

We appreciate your time and your consideration of our submission.

Thank you.

Kind regards,

M Hari

Dr Madhumita IYENGAR
Chair, Initiatives For Women In Need (IWIn)
Canberra, ACT
