**Executive Summary/Background**

Globally, there is concern about the shortage of suitably qualified workers who are interested in working and staying in the aged care and disability service workforce. In Australia, while this concern has resulted in a number of recent reports and policy initiatives, many of these initiatives have concentrated on the residential aged care workforce, and on shortages of nurses and doctors (Rees 2005).

Australia is the second most multicultural country in the world with a quarter (24%) of the population born overseas. Increasing numbers of the Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CaLD) groups are being employed in the aged care and disability sector with a third of the workforce (33%) born overseas. The aged care and disability service sectors face huge and growing challenges in managing a workforce of newly arrived migrants. The workers, many of whom are from African countries, provide services to a burgeoning client group from the established European, Asian, Aboriginal and mainstream cultures. The CaLD workforce potentially faces a number of barriers including (but are not limited to) the following:

- Physical and mental health
- Socioeconomic welfare
- Social needs and social isolation
- Quality of life
- Transport and dependency on children, particularly for CaLD women
- Housing (and age-friendly housing)
- Culture, language and English competency
- Migration/pathway of arrival to Australia
- Age on arrival
- Gender
- Geographic location
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- Infrastructure facilities
- Community support
- Marital status
- Rural or urban backgrounds and current dwellings
- Dispersion of children
- Little knowledge of services available to them
- Culturally inappropriate services
- Minimal links and connections between organisations and CaLD groups
- Lack of bilingual workers and interpreters
- Impact of trauma on mental/emotional health
- CaLD individuals and groups are passive in expressing various needs
- Racism in the health and social service system

Research however, does indicate the importance of being able to manage and work within a multicultural and diverse workforce. As a consequence, this project will deliver a multi-faceted model of culturally appropriate service delivery that recognises and addresses the complex interplay of diversity around service providers, care workers (especially those from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds), care recipients and their families. Service providers for the aged and disabled having access to training resources and a delivery program for care workers and their supervisors in metropolitan and regional facilities, will improve services to their culturally diverse clients and their families.

Objectives: The project will focus on relationships, culture, language and literacy training required by care workers and their supervisors. Key objectives are as follows:

1. Training Needs Analysis
2. Evaluate the Resources
3. Consult with Stakeholders
4. Design and Develop the Training Program
5. Pilot the Program
6. Refine the Resources
7. Disseminate the Package

Interestingly, the research also indicates that there are many existing training resources available to the Aged Care and Disability Sector workforce. These are categorised into accredited resources, non-accredited resources and additional resources.
Nevertheless, the amount of research specific to the aged care and in particular the disability sector is limited. Furthermore, there is very limited amount of research done into the CaLD worker experience and perspective of working in the Aged Care and Disability Sector. There is a clear service provider gap in the disability sector. Studies have shown that there are limited training opportunities in the disability sector (especially for Indigenous workers), particularly classroom-based courses for rural and remote students. There is a lack of linkages and coordination between Government and Non-Government service providers in the area of employment of Aboriginal workers in Disability Services. Furthermore, research has indicated limited availability of training, education and employment options in the disability sector, which are supportive of the cultural needs of students and workers, taking into account the social, educational and physical barriers for Aboriginal people.

Various research studies have put forward some recommendations to bridge the gap in the aged care and disability sector, some of which include: leadership (managers supporting change), education and training (to be done in tandem with other strategies and tailored to the knowledge, skills and literacy levels of staff), communication and resources.

Recognising that settlement is a lifelong process is essential to meeting the needs of CALD clients and CALD workers. Therefore, a ‘whole-of-government’ approach should be employed where policy and funding guidelines for services to CALD clients and CALD workers are developed between all relevant departments, particularly in the Aged Care and Disability Sector.

*Saba Rahi, MMRC Project Officer, Fortis Consulting in partnership with Metropolitan Migrant Resource Centre (MMRC)*

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