



Albury-Wodonga Ethnic Communities Council | Annual Report 2014 - 2015



Acknowledgment of Country

The Albury-Wodonga Ethnic Communities Council acknowledges the traditional owners of this country, and we pay our respects to their elders past and present. We seek to walk with Australia's first peoples in a spirit of harmony, respect and cooperation.

Albury-Wodonga Ethnic Communities Council

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Welcome

It is our pleasure to present the Albury-Wodonga Ethnic Communities Council Inc. 2014-2015 Annual Report.

Since our recent beginnings in late 2014, AWECC has been working hard to set in place a strong foundation and establish ourselves as the peak body for ethnic and multicultural communities on the Border. As a member-driven, community-focused organisation, our purpose is to advocate on behalf of local ethnic and multicultural communities, improve service delivery outcomes, promote solidarity and unity amongst ethnic community groups, and celebrate cultural diversity.

Central to our work in 2014-2015 were efforts to establish pillars of governance and policy that will provide a solid platform for our organisation to serve the communities we represent; a task that will continue into the coming year ahead. Our efforts to engage with communities, holding a community forum held in November, and the community-wide survey currently being conducted will help us understand more fully the needs of our diverse communities. These needs will be increasingly reflected in our actions in 2016, especially through the objectives outlined in our Strategic Plan 2015-17.

Our vision to Advocate – Celebrate – Engage have guided our work this year and helped us to determine our priorities when there were so many competing issues to address. One of our constant challenges is to make choices about what are the most important issues to pursue for our members. We of course rely to a large extent on our state counterparts ECCV and ECCNSW and the FECCA federally, to respond to the important issues at those levels, but we will also determine to take a lead on issues that affect our members locally.

Out of those areas of need that we prioritised in 2014-2015 came our four Key Objectives and goals which were, migrant employment, community solidarity and self-sufficiency, resourcing, and advocacy.

Our role includes representing the interests of our members, advocating on their behalf, and the provision of important information and services to communities. This year we initiated what we intend will be meaningful and regular consultation with local governments and other agencies, and we will continue to raise awareness of local ethnic community needs. Community forums and working in partnership with a range of stakeholders to advance the interest of members is a key priority.

To do this work we need the support of our members and volunteers. We welcome membership applications from organisations or individuals who believe in what we do and want to be a part of our success.



Chairperson's Report

It is my great pleasure to introduce to you AWECC's first Annual Report. I am very proud and honoured to be Chairman of AWECC, of which I was elected in December 2014.

As expected, the inaugural year of AWECC brought many challenges, including forming a Board of Management, developing our purpose, strategy and goals, and the ever present challenge of resourcing to meet the needs of our communities and securing an office space. Despite this, I have been impressed with the level of skill and dedication the Board members bring to their work. As a team, we are very proud to represent the Albury-Wodonga region which is often referred to as the 'birthplace of Australian multiculturalism' with its rich migrant history and heritage.

It was exciting to finally see the birth of AWECC in late 2014, which was nearly four years in the making. I want to acknowledge the consistent support of the Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria (ECCV) who had a vision to see the ethnic voice of Albury-Wodonga revitalised, and without their support, this would not have been possible. We also appreciate the widespread local support, including that from both Albury City and City of Wodonga. We also thank the Victorian Government for backing the establishment of AWECC by allocating core funding through the *Peak Multicultural Organisations Grants* Program, of which will continue through 2016.

The 2014/15 calendar year seen many highlights for AWECC, such as the privilege our organisation had of partnering with several other community organisations to host a very successful cultural Diversity Week and Harmony Day in March, and Refugee Week in June.

It was also an historic moment for AWECC in March with the official launch of the organisation at a family day in Albury. We were delighted to have been joined at this special event by the ECCV Chairman Eddie Micallef and CEO Dr. Irene Bouzo.

Another significant achievement this past year was the development of our Strategic Plan 2015-17. This document will help us prioritise our efforts over the coming few years. A key focus of our strategy is to advocate to all levels of government on the needs and interests of our local ethnic communities. To this end we have been involved in forums and met with leaders at all levels of government, and locally we initiated what will be regular consultation with both Albury City and Wodonga City Council's.

As Chairman, I am determined to maintain our focus on what is most important to AWECC; that is our ethnic communities. It is this focus that drives us to continue consulting with ethnic and migrant communities through forums, surveys, social media and website, membership and partnerships. I look forward to the next year with great anticipation as I know it will be another period of growth and consolidation for AWECC. There is still a long way to go, but I believe through commitment and a spirit of unity we can achieve great things for our ethnic communities and members on the Border. In the meantime, I commend this report to you.

Teju Chouhan
Chairman



Purpose and Vision

The Albury-Wodonga Ethnic Communities Council (AWECC) is a Not-for-Profit, community organisation. AWECC is an incorporated body and a registered charity.

AWECC is member-driven and community focused. Its purpose is to advocate and represent the needs and interests of Albury-Wodonga's ethnic and migrant communities. This includes making local issues known at a Local, State and Federal level, and ensuring equitable access to services and full participation for the local ethnic and migrant population. Where required, AWECC will provide services to meet community needs.

Our vision is: Advocate – Celebrate – Engage.

- **Advocate** for equitable access and human-rights based outcomes for our ethnic communities and members;
- **Celebrate** the many positive benefits of multiculturalism and promote community harmony and respect; and
- **Engage and empower** local ethnic communities so they can participate fully in all aspects of civic, economic, political and cultural life in Albury-Wodonga.

Board of Management 2014 / 2015

Chairman

Deputy Chair

Treasurer

Secretary

Directors

Teju Chouhan

Mayssa Powell

Sachin Sachdeva

Carol McQuade

Aung Syn

Harka Bista

Moses Ceraman

Vijay Kuttappan

Sue Portors

Emery Mutela

Hasitha Fernando

Staff

Brett Sanderson

AWECC Project Officer, Wodonga Council



From left to right:

Sachin Sachdeva, Aung Syn, Sue Portors,
Hasitha Fernando, Vijay Kuttappan,
Brett Sanderson, Mayssa Powell,
Teju Chouhan, Carol McQuade,
Moses Ceraman, Harka Bista, Emery Mutela.

Key Achievements & Activities

We are proud to present some of the achievements and highlights during 2014-2015:

- AWECC officially launched at a family fun day in Albury.
- Development and launch of Strategic Plan 2015-2017.
- An office space secured in Wodonga.
- Secured funding for *SeniorsLINK* program to increase CALD senior participation.
- Participation in Refugee Week event in Albury.
- Attendance and networking at the Premiers' Royal Gala Dinner, Melbourne.
- Participation and presentation at FECCA New and Emerging Communities workshop.
- Co-hosted a community consultations visit by Refugee Council of Australia.
- Partner organisation for Cultural Diversity Week and Harmony Day activities.
- Hosted a public film screening of 'The Good Lie' at The Cube Wodonga.
- Support of 'Celebrate Africa' cultural night in Albury.
- Held a stall at the Volunteer Fair in Wodonga.
- Display of cultural artefacts and ornaments in 'Reflections on High' wall in Wodonga.
- AWECC welcomes Albury City's declaration as a *Refugee Welcome Zone*.
- AWECC successfully lobbies for the City of Wodonga's declaration as a *Refugee Welcome Zone* (further details to be released by Wodonga Council soon).

- Chairman speaks in Parliament House about his experiences as a former refugee and stateless person, as part of Refugee Week marking the successful re-settlement of 10,000 Bhutanese refugees across Australia, including the Border.
- Attendance and presentations by AWECC Board members at several Rotary Club meetings, and volunteering at the joint Rotary Club's 'Multicultural Night'.
- Hosting the Victorian Multicultural Commissions' Hume Regional Advisory Council (RAC) meeting in Wodonga, and meeting with Commissioner, Chidambaram Srinivasa.
- Attendance and presentation at FECCA's New and Emerging Communities workshop.
- Attendance and networking at the FECCA National Conference 2015 in Sydney.
- Attendance by Chairman at the UNHCR in Geneva, Switzerland, by invitation of the Refugee Council of Australia, and including a presentation on the role of the diaspora on settlement and integration of refugees.
- AWECC Community Needs Forum held and *Community Survey 2015* launched.



Communications and Publicity

Website

The past year AWECC has been working on the development of a website which it expects will provide a useful and relevant source of information and pride for local ethnic and migrant communities. The website will be launched at the AGM 2015.

Social Media

AWECC has been actively engaging with the community through it's Facebook page, and has plans to utilise Twitter and YouTube to a larger extent in 2016.

Newsletter

Our quarterly newsletter *ethnic voice* continues to be an effective way of informing members and interested community members of AWECC activities and updates. The newsletter is distributed to over 100 email subscribers, and many more other residents who access hard copies through local councils, Gateway Health and other migrant service providers.

Community Forums

AWECC will hold regular community forums as a way to discuss needs of local migrants and ethnic groups, and to develop strategies to address these needs.

Public events

AWECC hosted and participated in several public events designed to celebrate our ethnic communities and to engage the broader Albury-Wodonga community with the multicultural community and its issues.

Our History

In response to consultations in 2012 with local Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities, an interim committee was convened with the support of both Albury City and Wodonga Council, and work on establishing an ethnic communities council began. The project was strongly supported and guided by the Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria.

In 2013, the Wodonga Council successfully secured funding through the *Peak Multicultural Organisations Grants* Program from the Victorian Government's Department of Premier and Cabinet's *office of Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship*, to help with the establishment of an Incorporated Association and a project worker to support the association for two years.

In late 2014, the *Albury-Wodonga Ethnic Communities Council Inc.* was established, and its first Board of Management was elected.

Our Future

AWECC dreams of an Albury-Wodonga that has equitable access and opportunities for local ethnic and migrant populations, and a place where these communities operate and flourish in a spirit of unity and harmony, with the wider community.

From this dream, AWECC's *Strategic Plan 2015-17* was born. Our strategic plan has for key objectives, they are:

1. Promote solidarity and self-sufficiency amongst local ethnic communities;
2. Develop a migrant employment program;
3. Create central resource and information hubs for ethnic communities; and
4. Advocate on the affairs and interests of local ethnic communities.

In order to achieve our dream and goals, we need passionate members, volunteers and supporters, just like you! We look forward to your continued support in the coming year ahead.

Albury-Wodonga Ethnic Communities Council Inc. Financial Report 2014-15

INCOME STATEMENT FOR YEAR ENDING 30 JUNE, 2015	
REVENUE	\$5707.35
GRANTS	5,000.00
MEMBERSHIP	320.00
FUNDRAISING	387.35
EXPENDITURE	NIL
OPERATING PROFIT FOR THE YEAR	5,707.35
BALANCE AS AT JUNE 30, 2015	
CURRENT ASSESTS	NIL
CASH	5707.35
TOTAL ASSETS	5707.35
CURRENT LIABILITIES	NIL
TOTAL LIABILITIES	NIL
NET ASSEST/LIABILITY	5707.35
EQUITY	
RETAINED PROFITS	5707.35
TOTAL EQUITY	5707.35

Prepared by the Treasurer, Sachin Sachdeva.



Wodonga Council's *Ethnic Communities Council Project* Financial Report 2014-15

In late 2013, the Wodonga Council was awarded \$137,278 by the Victorian Government's Department of Premier & Cabinet's *Office of Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship* through the *Peak Multicultural Organisations Grants* program. The two-year project funding allocation is to help establish and make sustainable, an ethnic communities council for Albury-Wodonga.

Category	Expenses 2014/15	Income 2014/15
Salaries	22,172	25,114
Oncosts	3,202	6,278
Travel & Accommodation	522	2,500
Information Technology	0	5,000
Rent / Accommodation	0	4,000
Telephone - External	0	2,500
Printing & Stationery	3,063	6,997
Insurance	298	0
Consultancy, Training and Development	1,202	13,500
Audit Fees	0	2,750
TOTAL	30,460	68,639

Unused income was added to the 2015/16 budget.
Statement provided by City of Wodonga.

