

# ANNUAL REVIEW 2020



Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW  
*Representing All Communities*



**Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW**  
*Representing All Communities*

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*Featuring a selection of photographs from the ECCNSW photo album that captures images of the various ethnic communities across New South Wales.*

# Messages of Support



As a champion for multiculturalism for the past 45 years, and the first organisation of its kind in Australia, the Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW has fostered the multiculturalism spirit that underpins our society.

I am particularly grateful for your efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic. There is no doubt your actions in this challenging period, preparing and sharing information resources in a variety of languages, have helped contain the spread of the virus and kept our communities safe.

This is yet another example of the practical support you provide to ethnic communities, in addition to the wider role you fulfil promoting racial harmony and social inclusion.

Our harmony as a society is one of our strongest assets and that is due in no small part to the work of organisations such as yours.

The NSW Government is proud to continue its support of the Council in your important work across our state.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gladys Berejiklian'.

**Gladys Berejiklian MP**  
**Premier**



I commend the Ethnic Communities Council of NSW (ECC NSW) for your contributions to our multicultural society, especially during these challenging times.

Since its formation at a Sydney Town Hall Rally 45 years ago, the council's staff and volunteers have collaborated across government and non-government organisations to play a leading role in supporting our diverse communities.

While continuing to advocate on behalf of more than 350 community organisations, ECC NSW has provided an important communications channel for factual information on staying safe, healthy and active in many languages during the COVID-19 pandemic.

I sincerely thank the efforts of your volunteers and staff in these unprecedented circumstances and am grateful for your help in saving lives by containing the spread of COVID-19.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Geoff Lee'.

**Dr Geoff Lee MP**  
**Acting Minister for Sport, Multiculturalism, Seniors and Veterans**  
**Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education**



I am delighted to extend my best wishes to the Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW.

For over forty years, the Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW (ECCNSW) has brought together community groups and leaders to help make this state one of the greatest multicultural societies in the world.

As the peak body for ethnic communities across the state, ECCNSW has long advocated for awareness and social cohesion. The programs run by the Council are a model for how to work collaboratively with both government and non-government organisations.

As we navigate this terrible global pandemic, we must acknowledge the many challenges COVID-19 has presented to our culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

I take this opportunity to thank so many of our multicultural community organisations that have been on the frontlines helping those impacted by the pandemic - particularly those supporting temporary visa holders and international students.

On behalf of NSW Labor, and in my capacity as Shadow Minister for Multiculturalism, I thank all ECCNSW staff, members, volunteers and supporters and wish you many more successful years to come.

**Jodi McKay MP**  
**NSW Labor Leader, Leader of the Opposition**  
**Shadow Minister for Multiculturalism**



L: Joseph La Posta  
CEO, Multicultural NSW  
R: Dr G.K. Harinath, OAM  
Chairperson, Multicultural NSW  
Advisory Board

Multicultural NSW has a long and proud history of partnering with the Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW. Our relationship demonstrates the effective collaboration between government and community groups in working towards building social cohesion and community harmony for NSW. Together we strive to achieve outcomes for communities across the state.

During COVID-19, ECC NSW has been actively informing government on the impact of the pandemic on communities and advocating for support for migrant groups, especially multicultural seniors, across NSW. Multicultural NSW acknowledges the leadership role of ECC NSW in promoting cultural diversity and community harmony, and we look forward to strengthening our partnership into the future.

**Joseph La Posta**  
**Chief Executive Officer**  
**Multicultural NSW**

**Dr G.K. Harinath, OAM**  
**Chairperson**  
**Multicultural NSW Advisory Board**

# Chair's Message



Peter Doukas OAM, Chair

The year 2020 has been a challenging year for all of us and has impacted significantly on our members. This is not only in the multicultural space...

We began the year with the most distressing bushfires on record and it felt like we barely got time to breathe before

the COVID-19 Pandemic fundamentally changed the way that we live and interact.

It is my pleasure to report on the work and activities of the Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW for this year.

Our election in November 2019 saw new faces elected to the Board. I particularly welcome Mr Joshua Moses as our new Youth Chair and Mr Glen Falkenstein as the Secretary.

Furthermore, new Board Members, as well as the elected carryover Board members, have added a vitality to the organisation that I look forward to continue harnessing in the future. I also acknowledge the work of Ms Marta Terracciano in her role as Chair between 2017 and 2019.

The Ethnic Communities Council (ECCNSW), as the peak body representing multiculturalism in NSW, has adapted to the challenges of 2020 well. In my interactions with our members I can comfortably say that many of our members have also adapted exceptionally well. However, we continue to commit to our advocacy role for those most vulnerable in our communities to ensure that the policy of access and equity applies to all.

ECCNSW has continued working closely with Multicultural NSW and the NSW Government throughout the Pandemic. As the state-wide peak body, and in collaboration with our regional

ECC/MCCs, we continue to support the principles of multiculturalism throughout our communities through the funding received from Multicultural NSW to implement the Leaders in Cultural Diversity Program. Our participation in regular meetings organised by the CEO of Multicultural NSW, Mr Joseph La Posta and the acting NSW Minister for Multiculturalism, Dr Geoff Lee was critical in coordinating a response to COVID-19 and ensuring the continuity of relevant messaging to our multicultural communities.

Earlier in the year I participated in online events and forums with respect to the bushfires and the reactions to bushfires organised by various members. This also continued after the advent of Coronavirus and the introduction of lockdowns and I can say that we have maintained our influence throughout this difficult time.

Our ongoing work with our members has also faced challenges as our Board of Management and Members' Forum transitioned to online meetings.

I would like to convey my appreciation to the Board of Management, in particular the Deputy Chair Mrs Fiona Mouhtaros, our Secretary Mr Glen Falkenstein and the Treasurer Mr Emanuel Valageorgiou for their ongoing work throughout this time. It would be remiss to not also thank Mr Jack Passaris OAM for his tireless support of the organisation throughout 2020.

COVID-19 brought with it a number of additional challenges which necessitated our staff to shift to working remotely and implementing successful continuity plans for our day to day operations.

Our staff have been working from home since March. Led by our resilient and dedicated CEO, Ms Mary Karras they have adapted and thrived in this difficult time. I acknowledge the great work that they continue to undertake in the management of the Pandemic while continuing the important work of the Council.

Our ongoing advocacy in the space of multiculturalism has continued, particularly in our attendance at the Advancing Community Cohesion Conference, Public Hearing on the Electoral matters; along with various Submissions, interviews with ABC, SBS radio. We also continued being engaged at a national level through the national Roundtable on multiculturalism coordinated by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

The pandemic has taught us about the importance of connectivity. To that end, the launch of our rebranded and innovative website is even more important than it would have been pre COVID-19.

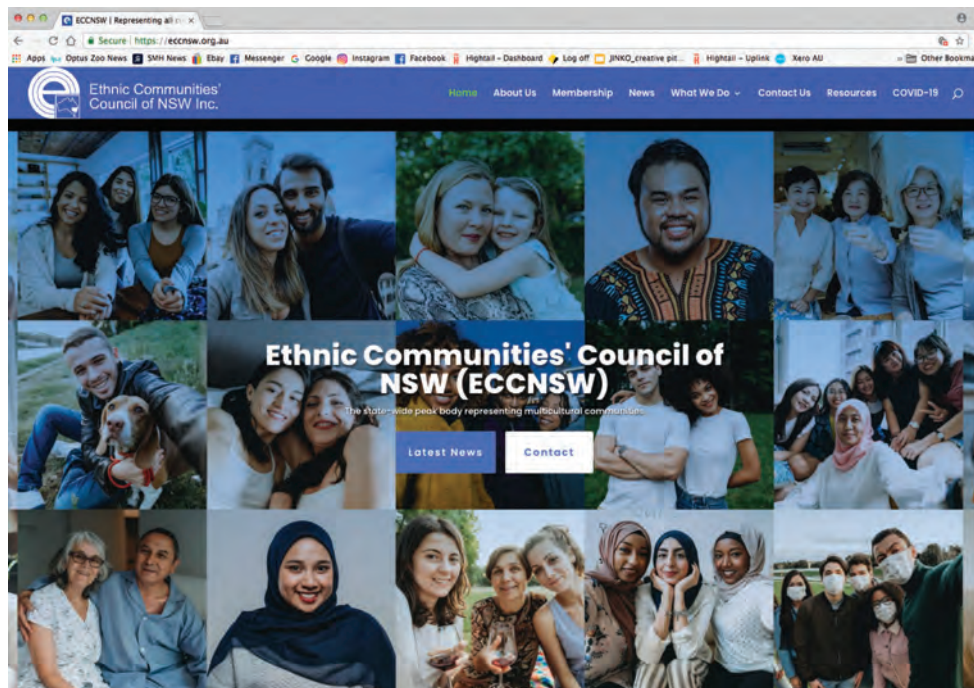
We should be aware of the challenges facing our multicultural society today. Increased racism and

intolerance stemming from lockdown is a real concern. The work of the Ethnic Communities' Council NSW is preserving and advancing the great Australian multicultural experiment. There are precious few truly multicultural societies in the world, and it is thanks to the contributions of the ECCNSW, and the numerous organizations that uphold the principles of multiculturalism, that NSW serves as a beacon to the rest of the world.

I look forward to meeting all our members in 2021 and thank you for your support throughout this past year.

Yours in multiculturalism,

**Peter Doukas OAM**  
**Chair**



Newly launched ECCNSW website

# Chief Executive Officer's Message



Mary Karras CEO

In this year under review the Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW demonstrated its resilience and agility during a time of unprecedented challenges.

The organisation's Strategic Plan 2020-2022 began a new strategic cycle that

ensued we remained effective and relevant. As the CEO, my role of leading and inspiring the organisation was put to the test as the year 2020 commenced with the local and global challenges of the Australian bushfires, drought and floods and more importantly when the pandemic hit our shores.

With a new Board of Management and Chairperson, the Ethnic Communities Council NSW upheld its commitment of promoting and maintaining community harmony. Through the various activities that promote community development, community education and advocacy we were able to respond to the challenges.

There is no doubt that the impacts of COVID-19 are being felt unequally across our communities. For our culturally, linguistically, and religiously diverse communities it has emphasised the inequity and gaps evident in service provision and support.

Our role in this new decade as it unfolds is to vigorously represent the voice of our multicultural communities as they navigate through this pandemic. COVID-19 has highlighted the value of working collaboratively with government and with key stakeholders including Multicultural NSW, (the state's government agency), to support rapid evidence-based decision-making.

By assisting government in community engagement and utilising our bilingual and media resources we are ensuring our community members and stakeholders are COVID-19 informed, and that the health of our most vulnerable and that

of the public's health, are not compromised.

To this end, the ECCNSW has:

- ▶ directly advocated in areas and sectors including domestic & family violence and sexual assault; ageing & isolation; home care and residential aged care; disability; education and home schooling ; housing and homelessness; racism; small business; employment; affordable energy, temporary visas and international students;
- ▶ engaged with our regional members in the Wagga, Hunter and Illawarra regions, as Multicultural NSW's Leaders in Cultural Diversity, to identify best practice and targeted response to the pandemic;
- ▶ participated in numerous virtual roundtables, consultations, and Minister's briefings to address the inequity in service provision and support for CALD communities heightened during the pandemic;
- ▶ conducted a survey with over 300 ECCNSW's organisational members and individual associate members collectively to understand the experiences and impact of COVID-19 in their communities.

This year has seen a significant shift in the organisation's operations.

The successful tendering of substantial national grants in recent years has elevated the profile of the ECCNSW, and has brought together partnerships and working relationships with the Ethnic Communities Councils and Multicultural Community Councils from the other states across Australia. The evidence-based outcomes and potential policy reform that these project grants provide, essentially benefits FECCA, our national body, who contribute to several areas of national policy and reform.

As with many organisations and businesses in this pandemic, the staff at the ECCNSW have moved to working remotely since the March lockdown. I am pleased to report that the Staff have transitioned seamlessly and continue to deliver on project outcomes whilst maintaining the social distancing and health regulations advised by the Department of Health.



As a state-wide peak body, we continue to prioritise and advocate on behalf of the needs of CALD communities. The dedicated COVID-19 Gateway on the ECCNSW website has proven to be an extremely useful repository for information and multilingual resources that assist communities and individuals.

In addition to our support of communities through this pandemic, we have continued with our representation and advocacy through our voice on several high-level committees and consultations including:

- ▶ NSW Domestic and Family Violence & Sexual Assault Ministerial Council
- ▶ Department of Health's Aged Care Liaison Group
- ▶ Greater Sydney Commission's Social Peak
- ▶ NSW Anti-Discrimination Community Engagement group
- ▶ Multicultural NSW's Leaders in Cultural Diversity
- ▶ NSW Department of Communities and Justice Multicultural Consultative Group
- ▶ Australian Hate Crime Network
- ▶ NSW Department of Education Multicultural Education Advisory Group
- ▶ Energy Council of Australia
- ▶ Sydney Water Consultative Group
- ▶ NSW Electoral Commission - CALD Reference Group
- ▶ Multicultural Youth Network

Our Board of Management, our Members' Forum, and our Staff remain committed to the four focus areas and strategic priorities identified in the new Strategic Plan 2019-2022 as being:

## 1. Engage and Empower

Engage, involve and empower CALD communities to contribute to, and participate in, all aspects of public life

## 2. Collaborate and Partner

Collaborate and form partnerships to generate collective action on issues of importance to CALD communities

## 3. Lead and Represent

Take a leadership role as an advocate for multiculturalism and represent issues of importance to CALD communities to governments and businesses

## 4. Strengthen and Build Capacity

Strengthen our processes and build organisational capacity to achieve strategic objectives

The parameters with which we worked in particularly over the past six months, were extraordinary. Yet despite this, we achieved so much. We continued our governance responsibilities by maintaining the monthly Board meetings via video conferencing, we enhanced our opportunities to provide input into policy and programs, we created a new and rebranded website and we transitioned to innovative uses in technology for our day to day work.

None of these achievements would have been possible without the exceptional efforts of committed staff, including the pool of bi-lingual/ bi-cultural educators we draw on throughout the year for their grass roots connections, language proficiency and cultural expertise. I would like to express my personal thanks to all those who have contributed to the work of the ECCNSW for their diligence and commitment to our vision and mission.

I look forward to the COVID-19 recovery phase and the opportunities for a greater footprint of engagement from the Ethnic Communities Council of NSW across the state and beyond the borders.

**Mary Karras**  
CEO

# About Us

## Our Purpose

The Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW is the only state wide peak body representing multicultural communities across New South Wales.

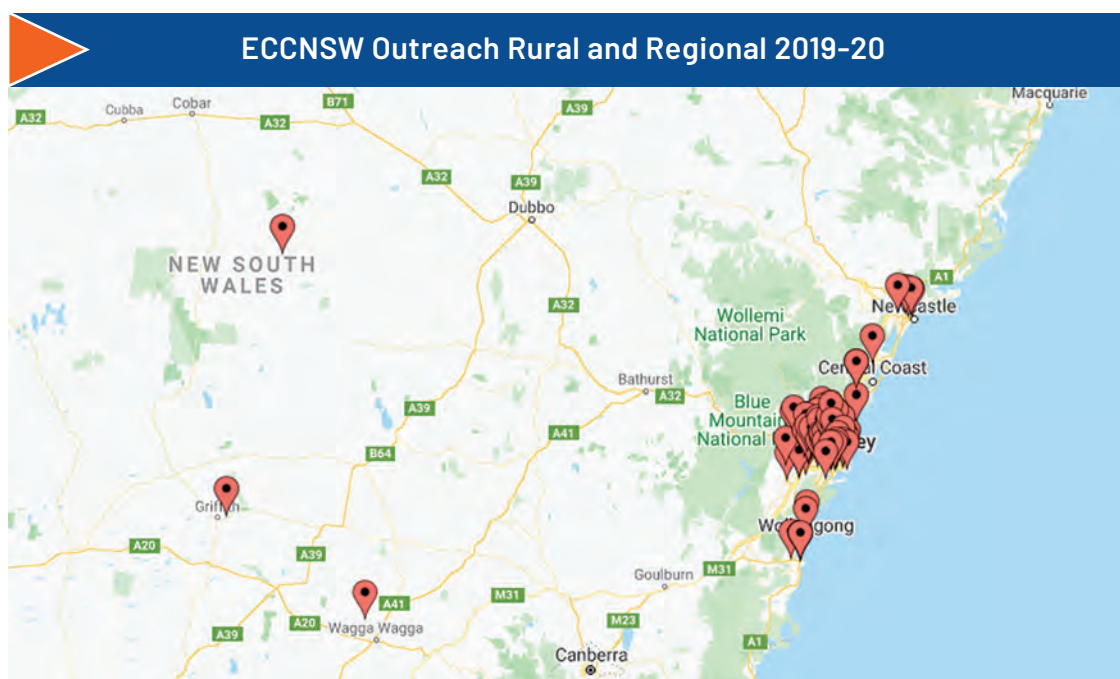
## Our Vision

An inclusive Australian society that actively upholds the principles of multiculturalism.

## Our Results

Our key areas are:

- ▶ **ENGAGE AND EMPOWER**  
Engage, involve, and empower CALD communities to contribute to, and participate in, all aspects of public life.
- ▶ **COLLABORATE AND PARTNER**  
Collaborate and form partnerships to generate collective action on issues of importance to CALD communities.
- ▶ **LEAD AND REPRESENT**  
Take a leadership role as an advocate for multiculturalism and represent issues of importance to CALD communities to governments and businesses.
- ▶ **STRENGTHEN AND BUILD CAPACITY**  
Strengthen our processes and build organisational capacity to achieve strategic objectives.



# 361 Community Organisations



## 45 Years

Since we were founded by multicultural communities at a Town Hall rally



**11** Staff engaged in advocacy, policy & sector development

**2** Specialising in energy reduction & climate change

**6** Generalists working on state-wide issues

**4** Specialising in community care

**2** Engaged in media & communications

**4** Specialising in capacity building in disability

**84%** Ethnic community organisations

**17%** Other non-profit organisations

**9%** Multicultural service providers

## \$114,000

The funding we received for 2019-20 from the NSW Government through Multicultural NSW



# 64 Community Representatives



**84%** Born overseas



**24** Language groups that speak all of the most commonly spoken languages in NSW



**31** Ethnicities



**10** Belief systems



**11%** Refugees



# Community Development

## Men Against Violence Project (MAV)

The Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW (ECCNSW) received funding from the Department of Social Services (DSS) to implement the Men Against Violence Project (MAV).

The MAV project commenced in May 2018 and aims to apply the model of a Wellbeing Connector (WBC) to engage men in meaningful conversations about domestic violence. It is envisaged that these conversations empower men from CALD backgrounds to become a pipeline for change as they challenge current perceptions towards domestic violence in their community.

Project implementation required the commissioning of Wellbeing Connectors (WBCs) from Sudanese and Tamil backgrounds in Auburn, Blacktown, and Parramatta areas. Men from Sudanese and Tamil speaking communities were recruited by ECCNSW from within their own communities and trained on how to facilitate meaningful and respectful conversations about domestic violence with other men in their own communities. These conversations were undertaken in local coffee shops, parks and places of worship where men frequent where they



Induction Day of the Wellbeing Connectors with the NSW Police Force in Bankstown

were encouraged to pledge support in eradicating domestic violence. Assistance was also offered to NSW Police and the Department of Justice to extend the project into Local Courts; provision of WBC's bilingual DV Support Officers who possess cultural expertise and assistance during charging of offenders; police interaction in court; or at police stations with offenders.

The key to the outcome of this project is to effect change by building the capacity and resilience from within one's own community.



Wellbeing Connectors from Sudanese and Tamil backgrounds

The MAV WBCs were able to deliver and speak to men from Sudanese & Tamil backgrounds in the geographical areas shown in the following table:

Area	Community	# Sessions	#Participants	# Pledge
Auburn	Tamil	2	12	10
	Sudanese	3	22	5
Blacktown	Tamil	9	50	35
	Sudanese	6	35	15
Parramatta	Tamil	2	13	13
	Sudanese	5	28	11

Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 the MAV conversations were suspended. However, a continuity plan was put into place and an online platform with the Wellbeing Connectors and the Advisory Committee members was established. This enabled multilingual resources and support for the community to be maintained.

This year ECCNSW was funded by DSS to extend the project until March 2021 and expand its focus the with men from Arabic, Dinka, Punjabi, Sudanese, and Tamil communities.

MAV Project is one way we envisage will help change men's attitudes and perceptions of domestic violence against women and children in our society.



MAV Project Coordinator mentoring and supporting the Wellbeing Connectors



An Advisory Committee Meeting at the ECCNSW office



Wellbeing Connectors meeting with Advisory Committee Members

## 'My Journey' Program

This exciting program, funded by the Department of Social Services, aims to collate and share stories about living well with a disability, brought to life through the power of storytelling. These stories are currently being recorded in 10 languages as both podcasts and short films. These personal journeys are to be disseminated throughout 2020-2021 via ethnic radio, a designated website, and on social media.

### Cultural lens

'My Journey' focuses on the 10 lived experiences of people from a CALD background living well with a disability. As they talk about their experiences and journey, their stories reference and reflect on the cultural barriers and challenges experienced by CALD people. Cultural taboos, stereotypes and cultural attitudes are discussed and unpacked as the individuals talk about how cultural barriers affect an individual's ability to live well with a disability.

### Local solutions

While the short films and podcasts reflect on the challenges experienced by each storyteller, they also highlight local solutions and strategies the individual uses to assist them to live well.

These personal stories highlight the important role that not only family play (but also the broader community) on how one lives well with a disability. The role of professionals in the industry, sales staff in retail stores, children and teachers in schools, operators and people attending local shops, cafes, and outdoor areas all can play a part in developing an inclusive and understanding society. One which values the humanitarian right to feel included and to have the choice of how and when to participate equally in all aspects of community life.

### 'My Journey' program website

Construction of a designated website for the program is to be completed shortly, with radio broadcasts scheduled to be facilitated on air in 2020-2021.



Sandra Pires from *Why Documentaries* filming a participant in the *My Journey* program

### Filming and production during COVID-19

Unfortunately, COVID-19 placed delivery and timeline pressures on the program as face to face filming had to be postponed from March to June 2020. The filming and production partner *Why Documentaries* engaged for the project provided training and support to their staff and film crew in relation to COVID-19 safe engagement practices. This enabled safe distancing when meeting with storytellers and ensured everyone felt safe and comfortable while filming in the home.

### Media and marketing strategy

The next 12 months will see the completion of the filming of the final short films as well as the editing and final check of the podcasts.

The media and marketing strategy is scheduled to roll out the on-air conversations in 2020-2021 across ethnic media, YouTube, Skype, email and communication platforms such as WeChat and WhatsApp.



## 'Speak My Language'

### On air radio conversations about ageing well in Australia 2017-2019

The ECCNSW completed the highly successful national program, 'Speak My language - Ageing Well in Australia' in November 2019.

This program was fundamental in developing a national framework and an implementation model which ECCNSW is now using across several sectors.

The Authentic Engagement Framework together with the Storytelling on-air radio component of the program have proven to be a valuable tool and one which produces amazing results and meaningful experiences for the participants and those involved in the program.

#### Achievements

Over the last two and a half years, the 'Speak My language - Ageing Well in Australia' program produced over 450 podcasts and radio conversations across NSW, ACT, Victoria and Queensland.

Podcasts and radio programs were recorded and aired live in over 25 languages with over 60 bilingual / bicultural facilitators trained and supported to deliver the activities across the states and territories.

#### Themes and topics of interest

Fourteen (14) priority aged care topics and themes were discussed throughout the podcasts. These included: My Aged Care, Living and Ageing Well in Australia, Assessments, CHSP, Package Care Options, Carers and Families, Residential Care, Planning for the Future, Elder Abuse, Allied Health Services, Complaints, Rights and Responsibilities, Dementia Early Stages and Advanced Stages.



The feedback from bilingual/bicultural facilitators, radio hosts and consumers themselves has been overwhelmingly positive and the ECCNSW will endeavour to seek support to continue the work of the 'Speak My language - Ageing Well in Australia' program.

#### Final evaluation

A final evaluation report was completed and submitted to the funding body, Department of Health. A snapshot of the overall achievements included:

- ▶ The production of radio programs in over 25 community languages.
- ▶ Engagement of over 40 radio stations.
- ▶ Program roll out across the designated states in Australia to an estimated radio audience of 4,483,000 listeners.
- ▶ Podcasts downloaded 12,500 times by listeners in Australia and international audiences including UK, Canada, the USA, India, Spain, Portugal, Greece, Germany, and Serbia.
- ▶ The development of several resources including comprehensive training manuals, a training workbook, and the SML website.



- ▶ The adoption of SML Program in the Indigenous communities of Queensland.
- ▶ Significant capacity building outcomes with consumers, communities, radio hosts, aged care content experts, the bilingual facilitators (BLFs) and the agencies they work in.

ECCNSW recognises the strength and empowerment this Program enabled in being the authentic “voice of seniors” and the positive impact it brought to CALD and Indigenous seniors.

### Acknowledgement of partners and collaborators

ECCNSW recognises and thanks the members on the SML advisory committee for their support and assistance throughout the program. These were key stakeholders from the sector including: Aged Care and Rehabilitation, Alzheimer’s Australia, Australian Nursing Home Foundation, CASS, CO.AS.IT, FECCA, Greek Welfare, Health Direct, Macarthur Disability Services, Maria Berry (carer representative), NSW Elder Abuse Helpline and Resource Unit, NSW Multicultural Access Program, PICAC NSW, Primary Health Network,

Inner West Sector Support and Development Network, and the Seniors Rights Service of which many are organisational members of the Ethnic Communities’ Council of NSW.

Additionally, the ECCNSW acknowledges the knowledge and expertise of over 350 aged care experts who participated in podcasts and provided accurate and impartial information in several languages.

### National partners and broadcasting expertise

ECCNSW values its partners and recognises and acknowledges the national partners ECCQ Diversicare and ECCV, and broadcasting partners SBS and NEMBC, for their trust and faith in the ECCNSW as the lead agency for the initiative. This was the first program of its kind that saw a fruitful collaboration across the states and territories.

ECCNSW now looks forward to working with all the states and territories over the next three years to deliver a similar program model referred to as the ‘*Speak My Language - on air conversations about living well with a disability*’ program.



## **'Speak My Language' (SML) Program**

On air/on line community conversations about living well with disability

*"I'm so passionate to be part of this journey and get involved, and more importantly listen to others because storytelling is so powerful"*

*John McKenna (Alpha Traveller)*

### **'Speak My Language - on air/on line community conversations about living well with disability Program' Funding Partners**

The Information Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC) funded 'Speak My Language' (SML) program – CALD and Indigenous communities talking about living well with a disability" is a 3-year national initiative. This *SML- Disability Program* involves CALD and Indigenous Australians with disabilities sharing real stories and experiences via podcast, broadcast, and online that give practical tips on how they "live well" at home, at school, at work, and in the community.

The Ethnic Communities Council of NSW is delivering the program in partnership with state and territory based Ethnic and Multicultural Communities' Councils. FECCA, the national body, will have an important role in the steering group, addressing national policy issues across the sector.

### **'Speak My Language - on air/on line community conversations about living well with disability Program' National Team**

The *SML - on air/on line community conversations about living well with disability* National Team has worked vigorously to initiate the co-design phase 2.0 and Alpha test stage. With the development of a Moodle, a training resource was provided for the Travellers who will Alpha test the podcast series on selected "storytellers". A Traveller is a person living with a disability, or parents of children with a disability, and/or actively involved in the disability sector, who will interview other community members about living well with a disability.



*"The mentoring team is really great and the Moodle itself is really brilliant"*

*Jenelyn Terkildsen (Alpha Traveller)*

Working through this project with partner agencies, including the Ethnic & Multicultural Communities' Councils from the other states, is a major strength this project brings to the sector. The national team are super excited to have Mr Nikolaus Rittinghausen - Alpha Testing State Coordinator come on board. Nikolaus is from the Alpha Testing Partner Agency, the Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria. His primary task is to co-design the *SML- on air/on line community conversations about living well with disability*, State Coordinator's role and guide the National team through the jurisdictional requirements that this project will encounter.

In August, the National team provided two full day weekend workshops for the Alpha Travellers, as well as engaging in one to one bite sized interviews via Zoom reflecting on their experiences and personal journey thus far.

*"Meeting with the other participants, getting to hear about their journey has been a very eye opening and fulfilling experience"*

*Cecilia Filipovic (Alpha Traveller)*

***"I really believe in this program, which is why I want to be part of 'Speak My Language- Disability Program'"***

*Yousif Yassafiri (Alpha Traveller)*

The national team has assembled an Advisory group who will participate and engage in the Alpha test stage, as well as play an active role throughout the program to ensure national consistency, branding and continuous improvement with training and development.

### **Social Distancing isn't holding back the 'Speak My Language - on air/on line community conversations about living well with disability'**

Recent COVID-19 and social distancing rulings have left many businesses and services struggling with the question "what now?" The Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW through support and continuous guidance from the CEO, Ms Mary Karras, introduced a continuity plan that has enabled the team to continue to deliver programs off-base. Whilst no-one could predict the scale of changes to our lives since COVID19 was declared a pandemic, the Program Managers, Ms Jenny Bray & Ms Terrie Leoleos, report that implementing the Program's Risk Management Plan has meant the Program implementation remains on track. By rearranging tasks and implementing new technologies, the team has found innovative ways to reach out to audiences and participants not only across Australia, but around the world.

***"Because of the SML training I have friends from all over Australia"***

*Titus Raphael (Alpha Traveller)*

### **Principles guiding the program**

SML - on air/on line community conversations about living well with disability's guiding principles are the foundation on which all members of the Program live, breath and advocate toward building inclusive, accessible, fair and equitable communities for all to live well.



***"This experience has been very positive and very important for me to be involved in because 'Speak My Language - on air/on line community conversations about living well with disability' program follows the principles that I believe in too"***

*Christian Astourian (Alpha Traveller)*

***"Living well in the community, we need connection and inclusion. I think that's very important"***

*Minna Xinnig (Alpha Traveller)*

### **Preparing the 'Roll Out'**

Where did the year go...? The national team continues to work tirelessly and diligently throughout Phase 2.2 and fine tuning key areas of training and development by implementing continuous improvement plans.

***With a sprinkle of fairy dust the duck will no longer be wading through the water, but gracefully gliding the launch of the 'Speak My Language - Disability Program' nationwide in 2021.***

*National Manager, Ms Jenny Bray*

## Fee for Service

### Jemena meter reading

#### Gas and hot water self meter reading card

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW was approached by Jemena to assist them on how to best approach their CALD customers for an offer on a self-read, gas meter product.

This new initiative was introduced to minimise the gas meter reader's exposure to the COVID-19 virus, as it allowed the customer to read their own gas meters and submit their readings online, via email or over the phone.

This meant that the gas meter readers were able to practice safe physical distancing where gas meters are located inside buildings. In many cases, gas meters are located inside residential apartment blocks, and so it was important to communicate the option of providing self-reads to everyone in the apartments effectively.

The ECCNSW was approached to assist the messaging particularly to those from commonly spoken languages across the multicultural communities, specifically Mandarin, Korean, and Vietnamese, as well as in English.

The ECCNSW's bicultural and bilingual workers took the time to understand Jemena's messaging and were able to convey culturally and linguistically appropriate messaging that enabled the self-read product to be used accurately.

Jemena expressed their appreciation and foresee further partnerships with the ECCNSW in the near future.

## NSW Tenants Union Community Language COVID Report

### Renters' guide to COVID -19 - Community language COVID-19 factsheets

The Tenants' Union of NSW developed an extensive English language factsheet to inform renters in NSW about their rights under the COVID-19 health directive in April 2020.

The ECCNSW raised concerns that many tenants in NSW are not fluent in written English particularly international students, refugees and asylum seekers.

In response to this, the Tenants' Union of NSW developed a more simplified Factsheet with key information. They subsequently approached the Ethnic Communities Council of NSW to adapt these to have them culturally and linguistically appropriate for the following six community languages: Arabic, Chinese, Korean, Spanish, Thai and Vietnamese which have the largest numbers of tenants and cover the groups for which we had most concern. The Factsheets can be found at <https://www.tenants.org.au/covid19/guide>.

These Factsheets proved extremely helpful and were subsequently disseminated to other community networks to broaden their reach.



## Inner West Sector Support Development and Training Program

The ECCNSW is very pleased to be a successful recipient of the Department of Health's funded Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) from both Burwood Council and the Inner West Council.

This government 'novation' was led by the CEO and resulted in the ECCNSW accepting the Program from each of these two local Councils to deliver a significant Sector Support Development (SSD) & Training Program that has expanded ECCNSW's aged care division.

The Ethnic Communities Council of NSW now employs the Inner West Sector Support Development and Training Officer who guides and provides capacity building for the Inner West CHSP paid staff and volunteers.

The Sector Support Development and Training Officer provides mentoring support, and pathways on how to access resources and up to date information to CHSP funded service providers in the Inner West Region. The focus of the role is on government policy; effective planning; and representing the Inner West CHSP providers and client needs on various Commonwealth, State-wide, Regional and local committees.

Since the Inner West Sector Support Development Officer commenced at ECCNSW in July 2020, the Officer has continued to support the 147 CHSP service providers across the Inner West Region in order to mentor and guide these services in implementing Commonwealth CHSP Reforms and building service capacity.

In addition, training is being promoted via an on line regional training calendar, and during these COVID-19 times this training has been delivered via in-house Zoom meetings and webinar sessions.

These training Zoom/webinar sessions are provided to up-skill the Inner West CHSP workforce, and these have been well received by over 60 staff and volunteers who have received training.

Funding is received from the Department of Health and the Program is funded until 30 June 2021 or until otherwise advised by the Department.

## Household Chemical Waste CALD Engagement Program

The Household Chemical Program is an initiative of the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment in collaboration with the Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW (ECCNSW).

The objectives of this project were to create a foundation of knowledge and awareness amongst CALD communities by:

- ▶ Identifying household chemicals
- ▶ Informing the safest ways of storage and disposal of those chemicals
- ▶ Increasing understanding of the waste system
- ▶ Recognising the environmental impact of household chemicals deposited in landfill.

This program was delivered through workshops in targeted languages as well as information through ethnic media and attendance at community and cultural events.

This round of Household Chemicals program funding directly assisted community members from various ethnic groups speaking Arabic, Mandaean, Assyrian, Mandarin, Cantonese, Vietnamese, Korean, Hindi, Tamil, Urdu, Telugu, Nepalese, Turkish, Spanish and Greek.

The workshops covered key objectives such as:

- ▶ Educating communities on how to safely dispose of chemicals
- ▶ The environmental impacts of chemicals in landfill



The Hindi radio program at SWR99.9FM radio



- ▶ Knowing who to call and how to utilise cleanout services and community recycling centres.

There were 52 Workshops held in various local councils across the Sydney metropolitan area reaching over 700 members of the CALD community. Apart from the existing groups, this program enabled partnerships with TAFE, NAVITAS and English centres which helped broaden the reach to include the most recently arrived migrants and refugees.

Eight workshops were presented to adult English students at Fairfield, Padstow and Parramatta.

The Household Chemicals Program offered workshops to multicultural childcare centres targeting parents, teachers and children. As a result of these presentations, one of the participating childcare centres has implemented a rostered collection station at its premises where items can be left to be transported to relevant cleanout collections or to the Liverpool community recycling centre.

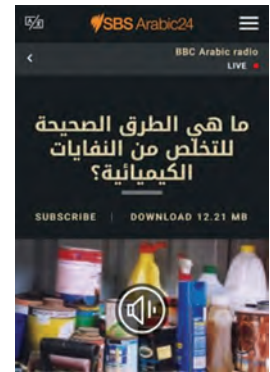
Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the program had to adjust to ensure continuity particularly for the delivery of the workshops and presentations. Implementing the Government’s advice of social and physical distancing to reduce the spread of the COVID-19 virus, the Household Chemical Program was moved to an online platform using WeChat and Zoom. Participants praised this transition and expressed positive feedback on the safe learning arrangements whilst in isolation.

In addition to the information conveyed online, the participants were kept up to date on changes or the cancellation of services due to COVID-19 via the ECCNSW’s community networks.

Ethnic media was another popular and effective medium used by many CALD seniors to learn and understand the messages of the Household Chemical Program. ECCNSW was able to facilitate 11 ethnic radio interviews and short video recordings that benefited a broader audience.

The Program was widely promoted and as a result five articles, containing information from the workshops in written form, were uploaded on the ECCNSW website, the SBS website, other ethnic community radio websites, as well as articles in ethnic newspapers.

Further marketing of the program, at nine cultural events, where there were over 800 visitors has enabled information to be disseminated in various languages. Having the information at these events, broadened the exposure and increased the knowledge base of household chemicals and waste management throughout the multicultural communities.



SBS Arabic program



Vietnamese social group at the Yagoona Senior Citizen Centre

## Tech Savvy for Seniors (TSS) Program

In partnership with the NSW State Library, NSW Department of Communities and Justice, and Telstra, the *Tech Savvy Seniors* program is in its 6th round, providing an amazing opportunity for CALD seniors to increase their digital literacy skills. In this round, the Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW delivered a total of 271 face-to-face sessions in English in the following languages: Arabic, Assyrian, Mandarin, Cantonese, Korean, Vietnamese, Hindi, Tamil, Greek, Italian, and Spanish to more than 1500 seniors throughout the Sydney metropolitan area.

Due to the current measures in place to reduce the spread of COVID-19, the *Tech Savvy Seniors* program transitioned smoothly from a face to face model to an entirely online delivery.

The ECCNSW recognised that continuing the program was crucial in counteracting social isolation as well as keeping CALD seniors abreast with the information they needed to avoid becoming ill or infecting others. Having online access during this pandemic has been a lifeline for seniors and maintaining delivery of the program enabled an ongoing platform of connectivity.



Above: Cantonese TSS session in Campsie Library  
Left: Italian TSS online session

During these past few months since the lockdown in March, the ECCNSW bilingual educators have delivered 68 online Tech Savvy for seniors' sessions reaching over 540 CALD seniors. These online sessions were delivered in English, Arabic, Mandarin, Cantonese, Vietnamese, Korean, Italian and more recently added Turkish.

The topics covered proved invaluable particularly during the lockdown. These sessions included tips on how to connect with family and friends, how to maximise the use of an iPhone or iPad, ways of downloading useful Apps, increasing awareness of Cyber security and how to set up an email address.

The feedback we received indicated that these sessions were a blessing, particularly for seniors who were in social isolation at home due to COVID-19. Many appreciated the opportunity to acquire digital skills while in the safety of their homes. This knowledge has empowered many to connect and keep in touch with loved ones and has empowered them with the confidence to access online information.

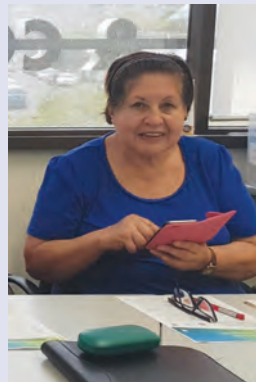


Below is a snapshot of the feedback from participants who engaged with the online learning:

- ▶ *"It was very convenient and safe especially in this hectic time with COVID-19."*
- ▶ *"I felt relaxed learning from home and the pace was good and easy to follow."*
- ▶ *"Thank you for providing the opportunity for us to learn safely from home and to keep in touch with family and friends during the lockdown."*

*"This is like a new chapter for my life learning challenge at this age.*

*I was so scared at first because I could not find the right course for me. Now, with this wonderful course supported by Telstra, NSW Government, the State Library and the Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW, it has been great. I really hope these courses continue. I feel included in the society now that I can use the technology. It is amazing how much I have been missing out [because of] fear. Now that is overcome!"*



Rosa Moore

*"This has been a fantastic course. One of the characteristics that I love more is that [it] is SLOW. This is what elderly people appreciate the most. I had some basics about the computer and the smartphone but there was a point in which I stopped using it and I forgot how to use it again. Now I am re-learning how to use these devices and it is something just awesome".*



Monica Vera



Above: Korean TSS session in Hornsby Library

Left: Mandarin TSS session in Merrylands Library



Cantonese TSS Session, in Campsie Library

### Bin Trim Program 3

NSW businesses send more than 2 million tonnes of business waste to landfill each year. More than 70% of this could be reused or recycled. Reducing waste sent to landfill has environmental and economic benefits for everyone.

The *Bin Trim* program is the largest business recycling program of its type in Australia. The Program's aim is 'Waste Less Recycle More' and is funded by the NSW Environment Protection Authority. Since the program's inception in 2015, it has helped approximately 30,000 CALD businesses in NSW divert waste from landfill and into recycling since its inception in 2015.

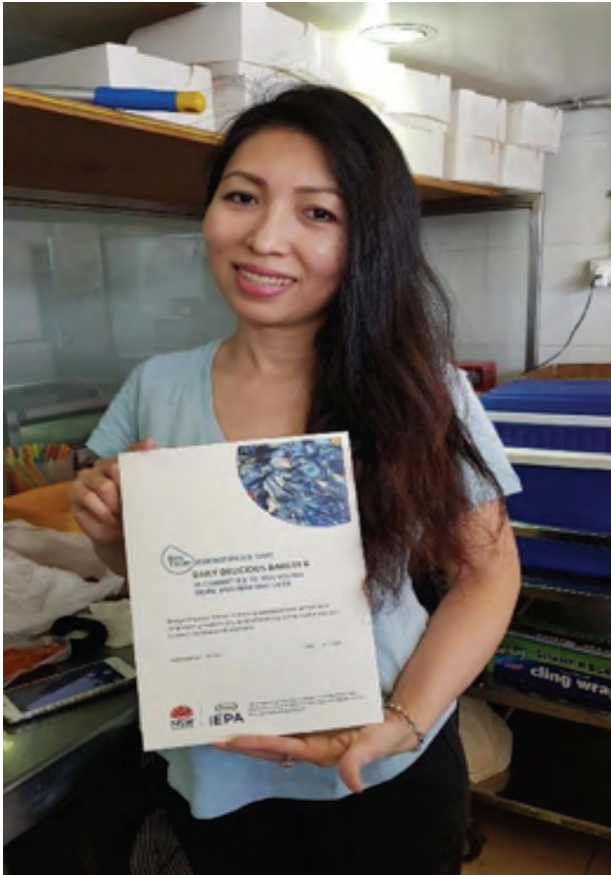
The ECCNSW has been a grantee of *Bin Trim* Rounds 1,2 and 3 and has successfully completed these projects with significant results.

As a state wide peak body that represents multicultural communities ECCNSW has had a long-standing focus on delivering environmental projects to CALD small businesses we have played a critical role in delivering



Above: Childcare Centre in Cabramatta that received resources and learnt about recycling

Left: Rumbles Fine Cafe, in Eastwood separating 'Return and Earn' eligible bottles for recycling



Daily Delicious Bakery in Riverwood receiving a Bin Trim Participation Certificate

and educating the ethnic businesses on the importance of waste separation and recycling.

The ECCNSW's *Bin Trim* program Round 3 provided free advice and support to CALD businesses to increase their recycling and reduce their waste to landfill. A total number of 240 CALD businesses participated in the *Bin Trim* program Round 3 and through this project a total of 995 tonnes will be diverted from landfill per annum from the 240

participating businesses. The ECCNSW's *Bin Trim* team of bilingual/bicultural educators helped businesses that spoke Mandarin, Cantonese, Arabic, Korean, Vietnamese, Tamil and Hindi.

## EPA Litter Campaign

The *Community Litter Grant* program funded by the NSW Environment Protection Authority aims to help deliver the NSW Government's target to reduce litter by 40% by 2021.

ECCNSW is working in partnership with Sydney Olympic Park Authority (SOPA) engaging bilingual/bicultural educators in Chinese, Arabic and Korean to reach out to users of picnic sites to prevent litter.

Through an initial engagement to capture user's views of litter and the location, the program aims to provide litter prevention messages and develop resources that prompts users to put rubbish in bins in various community languages. Park visitors will be supplied with resources including compostable rubbish bags printed with litter information to prevent littering.

It is envisaged that each site will have a 'dashboard' to promote litter prevention messages which will also provide valuable feedback on the effectiveness of the program.

As with most community engagement activities these have been postponed to later 2020 or early 2021 due to COVID-19.

Resource development such as dashboard installation, park visitor surveys, a pledge website, associated resources, and litter prevention giveaways (ie. compostable bags) are in progress.





## 'Vote Talk' Live!

Following the success of the *Vote Talk* program, the ECCNSW has successfully secured funding from the Australian Electoral Commission for a second round to deliver *Vote Talk* activities in 2020/2021.

This next phase of the program will once again use the power of ethnic radio to broadcast In-Language conversations that inform and empower CALD communities to enact their right to vote in Australian government elections. ECCNSW delivered *Vote Talk* in partnership with the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC).

### Working with new language groups

This program uses a "train the trainer" model that aims to engage and resource trusted and recognised members of CALD communities to broadcast and podcast impartial and accurate information to make voting in Australia easy to understand.

The 'Train the Trainer' model engages members of the CALD community from Western Sydney.

In this new round, the program focuses on the following language groups:

- ▶ Turkish
- ▶ Bosnian
- ▶ Korean
- ▶ Gujarati
- ▶ Samoan

### Fresh new 'Vote Talk' look and feel

As part of the new roll out of this phase, there are improvements to the original *Vote Talk* program which include:

- ▶ A fresh new look website with links to the Australian Electoral Commission as well as access to educational materials and multilingual resources
- ▶ Access to "in language" podcasts and short videos as well as social links to enable downloads for both previous and new podcasts being developed
- ▶ A new marketing and social media campaign that includes ongoing SEO and targeted promotion strategies throughout the *Vote Talk* program

### Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters in 2019

The ECCNSW was invited to participate in national and state wide discussions pertaining to voting and CALD communities.

A *Vote Talk* paper was developed and presented to the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters in 2019.

We also participated in a round table discussion with the Victorian Electoral Matters in May 2020 to discuss the 2019 *Vote Talk* round and the value and impact the program and its activities had on CALD communities.

## 'Be Connected' The Good Things Foundation

*Be Connected* is an Australia-wide initiative empowering all Australians to thrive in a digital world.

This project is funded by The Good Things Foundation established to support digital literacy among older Australians in CALD communities.

The ECCNSW offered support to senior members in the CALD community to develop their digital skills and confidence through the *Be Connected* program.

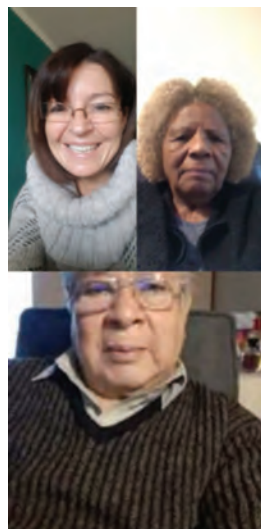
Trained bilingual digital mentors from ECCNSW have in turn trained 15 community group / organisation coordinators to become the digital mentors in a 'train the trainer' model.

Together, these mentors have been delivering learning sessions to 100+ older Australians in Mandarin, Cantonese, Arabic, Vietnamese, Korean and Spanish.

As a result of COVID-19 all sessions were delivered online using a variety of tools including Zoom, Whatsapp, and Facebook messenger to acknowledge the method of online sessions respective community members preferred.

This program was very timely, as it was during this pandemic that online and digital activity increased exponentially. The CALD seniors who participated in the program expressed their sincere gratitude for the opportunity.

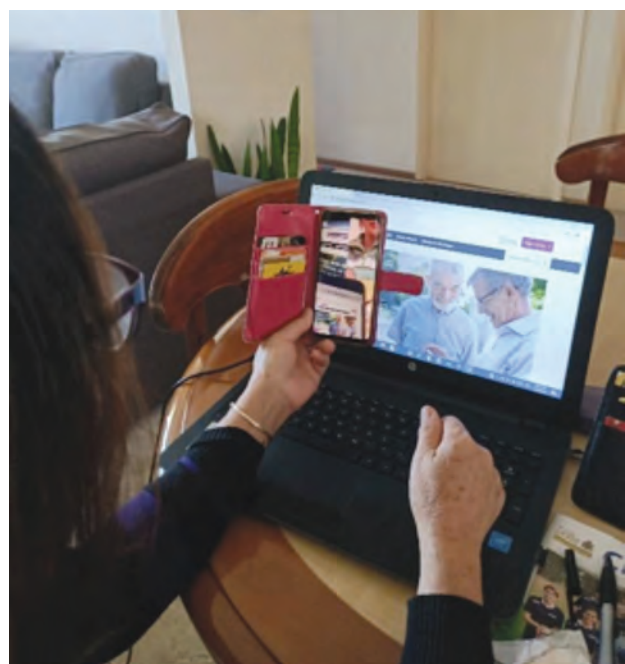
They are more confident in using the online platform and feel more connected during these times of social isolation.



A *Be Connected* session delivered in Spanish via Whatsapp



ECCNSW's Vietnamese bilingual digital mentor training a Vietnamese community coordinator to become a digital mentor who will then train the senior members in the Vietnamese community



A *Be Connected* session delivered in Vietnamese via Facebook messenger



## The NSW Multicultural Access Program (MAP)

Communication and connectivity have been fundamental components of the NSW State-Wide MAP program this year. In amongst national reviews, parliamentary hearings and national inquiries there were the effects of the national COVID-19 pandemic which impacted significantly on both service providers and consumers.

While this has been a trying time, it has also become the catalyst for creating innovation and best practice across the aged care sector. The NSW State-Wide MAP program has focused on developing innovative communication strategies to expand its reach and support the sector, while maintaining strict social distancing requirements.

### Technological based solutions

The use of various tech-based solutions has been fundamental in assisting the NSW MAP program to reach partners and collaborators as they continue to deliver activities during these difficult times. Several different online communication platforms, software, and applications have been utilised including Zoom, Microsoft Teams, individual Websites and plug-ins, QR Codes, audio surveys, podcasts, and webinar facilities. These are now becoming the norm and considered just another day at the office. This has also meant a significant investment of worker's time and organisational costs associated with purchasing but also learning the new technology, and ensuring it provides a smooth transition from the face-to-face communication. We are all now more familiar with new online virtual engagement, which will in many cases become the norm of the future.

### The National Multicultural Sector Support and Development Alliance

The NSW State-Wide MAP program has partnered with the ECCQ State-Wide Multicultural Advisory Program and the ECCV State-Wide Sector Support and Development Program to develop a new collaboration called the CHSP Multicultural Sector Support and Development Alliance.

This collaboration allows the CALD SSD programs across the three states to work together to streamline practices, share resources, and discuss identified gaps and learnings. This collective has planned a number of consultations and activities which will take place over the next 12 months that will bring together key aged care stakeholders, CALD aged care service providers, and the multicultural sector to discuss ways in which the specific and diverse needs of CALD seniors and their families can be met.



### The Multicultural Exchange Hub for Ageing

is a newly developed website, established and maintained by the ECCNSW Statewide MAP Officer, Ms Terrie Leoleos, that has now expanded to include partners from CHSP Multicultural Sector Support and Development Alliance and the NSW MAP program.

The Hub is a CHSP streamlined connection to the Commonwealth Government Department of Health CHSP funded Multicultural Access Programs and CALD Sector Support and Development Programs. While online participants can:

- ▶ **Connect** – to the latest information regarding CHSP
- ▶ **Share** – CALD resources and materials
- ▶ **Collaborate** – through the HUBS networks and CALD SSDs
- ▶ **Innovate** – Facilitate or participate in think tanks and small group activities to develop initiatives and “tap into” cultural expertise across the country.

The website provides updates on sector developments, events and information of interest to CHSP providers, multilingual resources, quizzes, monthly newsletters, information which will assist them to meet policy and quality requirements, and much more.

## 2019 National CHSP Review conducted by KPMG



The ECCNSW facilitated communication between the NSW MAP Network Officers in the network and the National Multicultural Sector Support and Development Alliance to compile a report which

was submitted to KPMG as part of the national CHSP review. This is a comprehensive document providing feedback on the current mapping of CALD SSD programs across the three states, activities delivered, and the value and impact of MAP and CALD SSD programs.

### NSW MAP Network

This network continues to meet regularly and is proving to be of great value.

Since COVID19 the meetings of the network have been held monthly via Zoom, in order to assist the MAP Officers during COVID19 and respond to the significant impact on the ageing sector. The ECCNSW Statewide MAP Officer has developed several resources and support structures to support the sector and assist MAP colleagues and the network including:

- ▶ MAP induction for those new to the role
- ▶ Online portal for MAP Officers only
- ▶ Shared materials and Kits to support CHSP services in various topics and themes
- ▶ Facilitation of a Planning and Strategic Development Day
- ▶ New branding and logo
- ▶ New website to promote CALD SSD and MAP programs across the state
- ▶ Profiles of each MAP program with links

These strategies are assisting to ensure the MAP programs have a strategic direction, deliver a uniform approach, minimise duplication, and share resources and costs, while delivering innovative initiatives to services in their planning area.



## CALD consultations on perspectives of Active Ageing, Wellness and Reablement

The ECCNSW MAP program has worked closely with other providers to begin drafting the final report of the 2018-2020 Wellness and Reablement Research project.

The research focused on exploring the following:

- ▶ the different ways in which different CALD cohorts define wellness
- ▶ the different themes and issues which are more prevalent when defining living well
- ▶ the different cultural influences which affect and determine how wellness is perceived
- ▶ the themes and issues which affect the way in which people feel they respond to ageing well through structured programs and activities
- ▶ The themes and issues which affect the way in which they participate in everyday community tasks and activities and whether their perception of wellness is an influencing factor.

Over 450 participants were involved in focus groups and in individual interviews as part of the research.

The draft report is scheduled to be completed and launched at the end of 2020.

### 'In My Own Words' – what it means to age well in Australia

In the drafting of the final report for the Wellness and Reablement Research project, valuable information was identified, including insightful and meaningful quotes and feedback expressed by CALD seniors as part of the focus groups and individual interviews. As a result, an additional multilingual resource in the form of a coffee table photo book was developed with the title, "in my own words". This photo book showcases and celebrates seniors living well and includes over 150 quotes, 200 photos, and features over 350 seniors across NSW living and ageing well. The photos are accompanied with quotes and statements, and QR Codes are used throughout the booklet allowing readers to listen to the seniors telling their story and reading the quotes in their own language.





The photo book also captures and describes the Authentic Engagement Framework used as part of the research to engage effectively with CALD seniors. It assists the reader to understand the various stages of an engagement process which focuses on developing meaningful interaction between the aged care sector and the CALD client or consumer. This excellent resource has proven to be more than just a photo book, but rather is an invaluable guide to developing meaningful person-centred interaction with CALD seniors.

The opportunity to participate and feature in the photo book was open to CALD seniors from across the state. The ECCNSW acknowledges and thanks the ethnic and multicultural councils across NSW as well as partner providers and services who submitted photos and quotes for this resource. The final version of this photo book is scheduled to be completed at the end of 2020. It will be available both online and as a printed copy. The online version of the resource will offer readers additional information about the CALD seniors who feature in the photo book.

The ECCNSW also wishes to acknowledge the co-writer and co-author of the book, the Inner West MAP Officer, and other MAP Network Officers who participated in the editing and review of the resource.

### Presentations and workshops

Presentations continue to be delivered to the sector. These sessions are valuable opportunities to engage with CHSP providers to share learnings, resources, and influence positive practice which support CALD consumers and their families. Presentations have included the following:

- ▶ FECCA Conference 2019 – *Bridging the Digital Divide - Working with CALD seniors and Technological Base Solutions*
- ▶ Penrith Community Care Forums – *Speak My Language – conversations about ageing well*
- ▶ Macquarie University – *Aged Care 2.0 – Using technology and online media to engage with CALD consumers*
- ▶ coaching and support over the phone to over 40 CHSP services providers through the Multicultural Exchange Hub
- ▶ South Coast Community Care Forum – *Using podcasts and storytelling to engage with CALD seniors and their families*
- ▶ NESST Community Care Forum – *Using the Multicultural Exchange Hub website*

- ▶ Allied Health – *Engaging effectively with CALD seniors*
- ▶ Aged Care Liaison Group – *The use of technology based solutions and podcasts to engage with CALD seniors*
- ▶ CALD Extraordinary Meetings with CALD service providers during COVID-19 initial lockdowns
- ▶ CALD Workforce Development – working with Hindi speaking allied health professionals
- ▶ Joint collaboration with Advance Diversity Services MAP Officer to facilitate a webinar on *Diversity Framework and Consumer Directed Care*
- ▶ Joint collaboration with Carers NSW and South Eastern Sydney Area Health Services regarding a Palliative Care CALD Program.

## Energy Advocacy 2020

The National Energy Market (NEM) has not got any simpler or less complicated to negotiate over the course of the year. Fires, floods, climate change and COVID-19 have added several more layers of complexity and challenge.

As noted in ECCNSW's Annual Review 2019, developments in the way energy is both produced and consumed (solar photovoltaics, wind energy, batteries and other storage techniques, energy efficiency) are radically changing how consumers are negotiating the energy market.

CALD consumers have generally had a varied engagement with new products and services in the energy sector, and research conducted by ECCNSW back in 2012 and again in 2016, pointed to an enthusiasm to engage with emerging technologies by CALD consumers. However, this enthusiasm was tempered by a lack of easily accessible and understandable information provided in linguistically and culturally appropriate ways. As it did in the previous year, it remains critical that CALD voices are heard loud and clear as our communities attempt to navigate this complex and confusing market.

ECCNSW's Energy Advocate has just completed a three and a half year project funded through Energy Consumers Australia (ECA) to monitor and evaluate the efforts of energy businesses, agencies, regulators and energy ombudsman schemes across the NEM in engaging and consulting with CALD consumers. The final report of this project, *Continuing Cultural Connections: CALD Best Practice in a consumer centric energy market* has been produced and can be viewed at <http://www.eccnsw.org.au/What-we-do/Advocacy/Continuing-Cultural-Connections-Report-2020.aspx>

This final report is an extension, and an update of the acclaimed ECCNSW guidelines for CALD consumer engagement *Cultural Connections: Engaging CALD energy consumers*, which is available at <http://www.eccnsw.org.au/What-we-do/Advocacy/Guidelines.aspx>

This comprehensive report includes an additional nine case studies of CALD consumer engagement by some of the participants of the project and highlights the important and ground-breaking work being undertaken by a range of players in the market. ECCNSW has been a major driver of some of these initiatives and has provided substantial advice, guidance and on-the-ground support to most of the activities.

The Jemena Gas Network (JGN) deep dive with the Arabic community in Fairfield, facilitated by ECCNSW's bilingual/bicultural educators, was a stand-out success and was an innovative first for the NEM. This project, (coupled with the wider Jemena work on its five year network revenue determination in 2019) was entered in the prestigious Consumer Engagement Award, jointly sponsored by Energy Networks Australia (ENA) and ECA. ECCNSW is pleased to announce that this work was awarded the first prize in the hard-fought competition and set a very high bar for any future work in the area.

One of the areas that was identified in previous energy market research undertaken by ECCNSW in 2016 was the low take-up by CALD communities of energy assistance measures available to consumers experiencing payment difficulty.

There are a range of reasons for this low utilisation. Apart from the obvious one where there is a lack of awareness of the opportunities for assistance, there was a considerable proportion of those surveyed who knew of this assistance but did not take advantage of the offers when they could.

General recognition of the significant lack of use of the range of payment assistance measures by the wider consumer population by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) and the Australian Energy Market Commission (AEMC – the rule-maker for the NEM) led to the Australian Energy Regulator (AER) consulting with a range of stakeholders, including ECCNSW, to establish a set of binding payment assistance guidelines for electricity retailers (the AER Hardship Guidelines). These Guidelines came into force in late 2019 in the Eastern states excluding Victoria.

Following extensive consultation with stakeholders over more than two years (that involved the ECCNSW) the Essential Services Commission Victoria (ESCV) introduced in January 2019 its own binding payment assistance mechanism for consumers in Victoria, referred to as the Payment Difficulties Framework. These two sets of enforceable guidelines form a major area of interest for the Energy Advocate and evaluating their effectiveness for CALD communities in need was the major focus of a research and advocacy project grant application to ECA in late 2019. Unfortunately, the ECCNSW was not successful in gaining funding from ECA for this project, but we believe it remains a major area of importance for CALD consumers in need of assistance with their energy needs.

One of the major observations of the *Continuing Cultural Connections Final Report* is the critical importance of 'being in the room' for effective CALD advocacy. Most, if not all of the successful projects undertaken by energy businesses and agencies have been advised and supported by CALD advocates particularly the ECCNSW's Energy advocate. However, this engagement is only possible through ongoing, appropriately

funded advocacy. It is challenging to maintain the capacity and expertise for successful and informed advocacy within the confines of a year-to-year project-based funding model which is the current system for most consumer energy advocacy and research.

Nevertheless, the ECCNSW maintains a strong presence in the sector through its Energy Advocate who is a member of a range of energy business customer consultative councils and groups (Ausgrid, AGL, Endeavour, Jemena Gas Network, SA Power Networks and Transgrid). The Advocate is also a member of the AER Customer Consultative Group (AER CCG) and its Working Group looking at the implications of COVID-19 across the NEM. The Energy Advocate is also a member of the Healthy and Affordable Homes Coalition (HAH) as well as joining the Australian Energy Market Commission (AEMC) and the Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) Consumer Forums and the Energy and Water Ombudsman Consultative Council on a regular basis.

## **Advancing Community Cohesion Conference (ACCC)**

Multicultural NSW in partnership with the Ethnic Communities Council of NSW (ECCNSW) and Western Sydney University, hosted the 3rd Advancing Community Cohesion Conference (ACCC) in Parramatta's City campus from the 10th - 13th February 2020. The Conference was facilitated by Professor Sev Ozdowski AM OAM FRSN, Director of Equity and Diversity at the University.

The Conference was enjoyed by over 300 people and focused on the political, religious, social and cultural aspects of cohesion. ECCNSW is grateful to have received a grant for \$8000 to cover all expenses for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) regional youth to attend the third Conference of its kind. With this grant, ECCNSW was tasked with the responsibility of sourcing and assessing CALD youth leaders from regional areas. During this period of recruitment and assessment, measures were implemented to find suitable youth to attend the Conference who would benefit

from disseminating the knowledge obtained and incorporating it within their daily activities for the benefit of their regional community.

Unfortunately, during the process of sourcing CALD regional youth, ECCNSW encountered several challenges that significantly affected the number of regional youth attendees ultimately at the Conference. Despite ECCNSW's networks and referrals it proved to be difficult to source CALD regional youth and to achieve a wider sample size to select from. This was due to several factors, the most significant being the large volume of bushfires ravaging rural and regional NSW at that time.

As the youth targeted for the Conference were to be from rural or remote areas, it proved very difficult for our contacts to find youth who were able to leave their areas in such a disaster. Many youths were compelled to stay at home on their properties to protect their land. It was also unsafe to travel at the time of recruitment, which



Left to right: Regional youth scholarship recipients: Marc Roppolo (Illawarra), Tenzin Kunsal (Central Coast) and Dhondup Yultse (Central Coast).

was another factor as to why potential candidates did not want to risk their safety in travelling to the Conference.

Nevertheless, the scholarship was taken up by 5 regional CALD youth, and the funds paid for their costs incurred by them for travel, food accommodation and attendance at the Conference. The youth were a great addition to the Conference, demonstrating the presence of emerging leaders working with CALD people in the regional communities.

The Conference spanned over a four-day period. The following three days from the 11th February, saw the Conference commence with a wide variety of speakers. The Conference was laid out into three sections: plenary sessions, interactive sessions, and workshops. Some of the subjects discussed in these sections included:

- ▶ Sports and ethno-cultural specific groups
- ▶ Indigenous Peoples of Australia
- ▶ Media Portrayals of minorities, religious and cultural groups
- ▶ NGOs and advocacy work
- ▶ Racism, stigma and stereotypes of CALD people
- ▶ Schools and Education
- ▶ The Power of the Arts and Entertainment Industry
- ▶ Human Rights
- ▶ Perceptions of Islam
- ▶ Refugees
- ▶ The Power of Community
- ▶ Statistical Analysis of Geography and Urbanisation

### **An ECCNSW Presence**

The ACCC saw four members of the ECCNSW's Board of Management attend, and two of those Board members facilitated the interactive sessions.



Mr Peter Doukas OAM, Chair of The Ethnic Communities' Council NSW

Mr Peter Doukas OAM, the Chair of ECCNSW, took pleasure in hosting the "Community Good Practice" session. This session consisted of four inspiring presentations that covered:

- ▶ Protection of vulnerable groups from violence, disorder and destruction in a community.
- ▶ Advancing people of different backgrounds and faith in a community, equipping them with opportunities to actively participate and contribute in Australia's diverse and multicultural society.

Mr. Glen Falkenstein, Secretary of the ECCNSW Board of Management (previously the Youth Chair), also chaired a session. Much of Mr Falkenstein's interests and work involves the media, and being invited to host the "Media" session at the Conference was most appreciated. The session consisted of four presentations which covered:

- ▶ The importance of storytelling to reveal truth and authenticity about cultures and beliefs.
- ▶ The representation of diverse communities in mainstream media.
- ▶ Analysing the framing, language and portrayal of Muslims in the media and how these may affirm pre-conceived ideas of the Muslim community.

## Highlight

The Advancing Community Cohesion Conference 2020 was an event that brought people from many different industries under one roof to share knowledge and experiences. By partaking in this, the ECCNSW reinforced the importance of enriching and educating others in their thoughts and actions, as the world strives to advance to a more cohesive, peaceful and respectful society. Whilst the interactive sessions and workshops were presented to smaller groups of people, the plenary sessions addressed all Conference participants. All speakers spoke with enthusiasm and great interest. Undoubtedly, certain ideas and concepts which participants may not have pondered in the past, made a stark impression.



Mr Glen Falkenstein, Secretary of the Board of Management, Ethnic Communities' Council NSW

# Abridged Accounts

The abridged income statement and balance sheet for the Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW Inc (ABN: 66 291 586 945) for the year ended 30 June 2020 have been prepared from the audited financial statement approved by the Management Committee, who are responsible for these financial statements as well as the information they contain. The unabridged accounts and audit report by Meagher Howard & Wright may be obtained from the Council.



**Mr. Emanuel Valageorgiou, Treasurer**

## Income Statement for the Year Ended 30 June 2020

	FY 2020 \$	FY 2019 \$
<b>INCOME</b>		
Grants	2,087,381	1,691,249
Donations Sponsorships Received	-	17
Interest Received	27,575	31,446
Membership Fees	8,368	8,913
Rent Income	1 09,809	1 35,218
Unexpended rollover next year	(798,444)	(399,995)
Sundry Income & Service Fees	1 01,524	26,640
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>1,536,212</b>	<b>1,493,489</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
Administration	97,383	1 66,639
Audit Fees	3,700	3,600
Bank Charges	5 96	576
Building Expense	79,640	69,512
Computer, Support & Software	67,633	34,934
Insurance	15,067	28,080
Media & Web Design	70,331	32,479
Staff & Contractors Expenses	1,151,565	1,166,050
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>1,485,915</b>	<b>1,501,871</b>
Surplus (Deficit) before income tax	50,298	(8,382)
Surplus (Deficit) after income tax	50,298	(8,382)
Retained earnings at the beginning of the financial year	1,247,755	1,256,137
Retained earnings at the end of the financial year	1,298,054	1,247,755

## Balance Sheet 30 June 2020

	FY 2020 \$	FY 2019 \$
<b>ASSETS</b>		
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	2,244,774	1,382,483
Trade and Other Receivables	54,887	33,938
Prepayments	11,266	2,078
Total CURRENT ASSETS	2,310,927	1,418,499
NON-CURRENT ASSETS		
Property, Plants and equipment	2,300,001	2,300,001
Total NON-CURRENT ASSETS	2,300,001	2,300,001
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>4,610,928</b>	<b>3,718,499</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>		
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Trade and Other Payables	174,891	544,611
Provision for Employees Other	108,498	86,133
Unexpended Funds Rollover next year	1,189,485	
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	1,472,87	4 630,744
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Building Improvement Reserve	50,000	50,000
Total NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES	50,000	50,000
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>1,522,874</b>	<b>680,744</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<b>3,088,054</b>	<b>3,037,755</b>
<b>EQUITY</b>		
Retained Earnings	1,298,054	1,247,755
Reserves	1,790,000	1,790,000
<b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>	<b>3,088,054</b>	<b>3,037,755</b>

# Board of Management

The ECCNSW Board of Management is a subset of the Members' Forum and includes all office bearers. The Board of Management's responsibility is to oversee the governance of the association in accordance with the Associations Incorporation Act 2009 and the ECCNSW Constitution on behalf of members. Some of the key activities of the Board include:

- ▶ Ensuring a strategic plan is developed to secure a sustainable future that enacts the objects of the ECCNSW Constitution
- ▶ Monitoring progress against the strategic plan
- ▶ Managing finances and resourcing the strategic plan
- ▶ Meeting all legal requirements
- ▶ Ensuring the organisation has policies and procedures in place
- ▶ Managing risk

## **Peter Doukas OAM, Chair**

Elected Chair in 2013 and re-elected in 2015 and 2019, Peter Doukas was the youngest ever Chair of the Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW. He also served as Secretary between 2009 and 2013 and presided over significant changes to the internal governance structure of the organisation. Mr Doukas is managing Director of law firm Denison Toyer, based in the Sydney CBD and operating mainly in commercial, administrative and estates law. He has worked in corporate governance since 2006 and has provided extensive advice to associations, and NGOs around compliance and governance. He is currently the Senior Deputy Chair of FECCA and serves on various other non-profit boards.



## **Fiona Mouhtaridis, Deputy Chair**

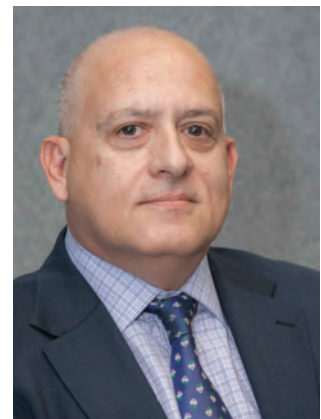
Ms Mouhtaridis elected as Deputy Chair in 2019 has been a member of the ECCNSW since 2004 and was first elected on the Board in 2007. She is an experienced not-for-profit board member having held a variety of positions in ECCNSW including Executive Member, Assistant Treasurer and Secretary.



Ms Mouhtaridis is a member of the Greek Orthodox Church Sts Constantine and Helen Ladies Auxiliary. Ms Mouhtaridis has completed a Commerce degree majoring in marketing and is a practising solicitor. She practices in a variety of areas of law including property, criminal, family, wills & estates and litigation. She is a passionate advocate of multiculturalism, women's rights, and social cohesion.

## **Emanuel Valageorgiou, Treasurer**

Elected as Treasurer in 2017 and member of the Board since 2005, he has served as Secretary and was Chair from 2011-2013. Mr Valageorgiou is an experienced NFP board director and formerly a senior executive with TransGrid, who provides HR and change management consulting services to NFPs. He is a Director of Multicultural Care Ltd, the Samian Brotherhood of Sydney & NSW Ltd and Glory Football Club with extensive experience in organisations dealing with multicultural issues, aged and disability care, youth and sport.





### **Glen Falkenstein, Secretary**

Elected in 2019 as Secretary, Glen served as the ECCNSW Youth Chair through 2015-2019. A solicitor and journalist by trade, Glen has worked as a policy analyst, immigration lawyer and legal advocate for persons seeking asylum in Australia and offshore.



He is the co-founder of the Australian Youth Parliament of the World's Religions and former Executive Member of the New South Wales Jewish Board of Deputies. Glen possesses degrees in Law and Communications from the University of Technology Sydney; having too studied in The Hague, Netherlands, and at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

### **Joshua Moses, Youth Chair**

Elected in 2019 as Youth Chair. Joshua is a government policy consultant, Director of the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies, Vice President of the NSW Council of Christians and Jews, and Youth PoWR board member.



### **Anthony Alexandrou, Assistant Treasurer**

Elected as a Board member in 2019. Started an accountancy firm approximately 50 years ago.



Holder of a FCPA Certificate and a CPA member for almost the same time as he has been practicing. He is also a Registered Auditor and Registered Tax Agent.

### **Christine Lynch OAM, Assistant Secretary**

Elected 2015 as board member and Members' Forum member since 2012. Member of AHEPA Australia Ltd 50 years, served as national president 2013-2015. A member of the Greek Young Matrons Association since 1984 (raising funds for children's hospital and Greek



Archdiocese), committee member of St Basil's Ladies Auxiliary for over 20 years, member of the Hellenic Women of Sydney committee raising funds to provide food, clothing, pharmaceuticals for orphanages in Greece. Chairperson of the AHEPA National Educational Fund Inc, member of the AHEPA Australia National Council, Secretary of the AHEPA Medical Foundation Inc. Ahepan of the year 2007. Member of the St Sophia Restoration Fundraising Committee under the Greek Orthodox Community of NSW, and a member of the Hellenic Lyceum. Attended Sydney TAFE Ultimo with Diploma in Floristry and Advanced Floristry. Retired business person.

### Tasha Vanos OAM JP, Assistant Secretary

ECCNSW member with various governance positions for over thirty years. Past National President of AHEPA Australia, Secretary of AHEPA NSW, Chairman of the AHEPA Medical Foundation Inc., Chairman Hellenic Tribute Inc. Sydney Olympics (Discobolus) and past President of the Castellorizian Club. He is also committee member for the Restoration of St. Sophia Church Darlinghurst and donor.



### Jack Passaris OAM, Life Member

Jack Passaris OAM has been an ECCNSW office bearer for 45 years. He is an ECCNSW foundation and life member and was present at the mass rally of all ethnic communities at Sydney Town Hall in 1975 where ECCNSW was established before the Hon. Gough Whitlam and the Hon. Malcolm Fraser. Mr Passaris has dedicated his time and efforts to the ECCNSW and to multiculturalism in general for over four decades. His passion for multiculturalism and social cohesion is evident in his involvement on various boards and organisations. He has extensive experience on not-for-profit boards and community organisations. Mr Passaris is President of Multicultural Care Inc and has been since 2003. He is the President of the Newtown Greek Orthodox Parish, Treasurer and Trustee of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia Consolidated Trust, former Marrickville Council Deputy Mayor having served in local council for 19 years, Trustee of the Foundation for Hellenic



Studies (UNSW) and various other positions. Mr Passaris was awarded the Order of Australia medal for his services to the community particularly through ECCNSW and local Government. In 2014 Mr Passaris was awarded the NSW Premier's Lifetime Multicultural Community Service Medal. He has demonstrated his ongoing and strong commitment to multiculturalism in Australia and community life.

### Ada Cheng

Ada Cheng elected as Board member in 2019 is a qualified Social Worker and holds a Master degree in Community Management. Ada has over 25 years of experience in Aged Care Management and has a proven track record in service planning and development. Ada serves as the CEO of Australian Nursing Home Foundation. Ada was on the Steering Committee of the National Ageing and Aged Care Strategy for People from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Backgrounds which supports the implementation of the Living Longer Living Better Aged Care Reforms. She also served on the CALD Aged Care Strategy Working Group (2015-17) to support and guide on-going implementation of the Strategy.



### Albert Vella OAM

Elected in 2019, Albert is former President of the NSW Federation of Community Language Schools, where he served for 15 years to ensure that communities across the Inner West of Sydney were able to maintain their cultural traditions whilst also



participating in modern Australian life. He is a founding member of the Polish School of Sydney and member of the Multicultural NSW Advisory Board.

### **Amir Salem**

Elected as Board member in 2019, Amir has more than 25 years' experience in teaching and program management of TAFE Multicultural Education program and community engagement.



He was also the lead tutor on a project which developed a training program for Australian business people conducting business in Asia and the Middle East.

Amir provided training to Australian Business teams deployed in Egypt, and worked as a bilingual tutor to a range of courses in TAFE NSW and has been tutoring a "Cultural awareness program" for the Australian Peace Keeping troops, Department of Defence.

Amir is the president of the Australian Egyptian Forum Council and a board member of various community organisations and advisory committees.

### **Indrajit Khuman**

Elected to the Board in 2019. Served in various Board governance positions for over thirty years. Active in Sikh community. Established first Sikh Gurdwara in north shore Sydney. Passionate about multiculturalism. Performed over the



years in Sydney Shell Folkloric festival. Former member of ministerial consultative committee. Counter chair of Care Worldwide, a community welfare organisation.

### **Maria Georgiou**

Elected 2013. Mrs Georgiou is a primary school teacher at an inner-city independent school. With experience in a variety of voluntary positions, she has a strong interest in multiculturalism and is passionate about playing a role in educating today's youth about the diverse world we live in.



### **Sam Pashalis**

Elected to the Members' Forum in 2012 and as a Board Member in 2017. Mr. Pashalis is the Secretary of the Greek Orthodox Parish and Community of Belmore "All Saints", and a Committee Member of various heritage and philanthropic associations. With a keen interest in understanding the multicultural foundations of our society, he is an advocate for the use of technology as a unifying resource towards that goal. Mr. Pashalis holds an Engineering degree and is employed in the ICT industry as a Senior Consultant.



# Members' Forum

## Members' Forum 2019-2021

Abbas Alvi	George Bouteris	Nick Anastasopoulos
Ada Cheng	Glen Falkenstein	Patrice Laskas
Albert Vella OAM	Helen Albanakis	Paul Tsanis
Amir Salem	Indrajit Khuman	Peter Doukas OAM
Andrew Georgiou	Irene Passaris	Peter Onisforou
Anthony Alexandrou	Jack Passaris OAM	Phil Chau
Arbin Lal	Jon Soemarjono	Sajana Nand
Carol Pavlou	Joshua Moses	Sam Pashalis
Chris Georgiou	Leila Papapetros	Sarosh Batliwalla
Christine Lynch OAM	Lia Albanakis	Siddique Panwala
Con Pavlou	Mahrukh Batliwalla	Steve Mouhtaris
Dean Albanakis	Maria Georgiou	Tasha Vanos OAM
Emanuel Valageorgiou	Maria Lills	Tolly Saivanidis
Fiona Mouhtaris	Maria Markos	Vasiliki Laskas
Fotini Loukis	Marta Terracciano	
Georgia Anastasopoulos	Mary Karras	

# Staff and Volunteers

Mary Karras  
*Chief Executive Officer*

Iain Maitland  
*Energy Advocate*

Louise Easson  
*Media and Communications  
Officer*

Esther Lozano  
*Digital Communications*

Terrie Leoleos  
*Manager Ageing and Disability  
Programs and NSW Multicultural  
Access Officer*

Jenny Bray  
*National Manager 'Speak My Language'  
'Living Well with Disability'*

Marc Roppolo  
*Project Support Officer*

Fadi Nemme  
*Project Coordinator*

Helen Scott  
*Project Coordinator*

Mariette Mikhael  
*Project Coordinator*

Christine Ahn  
*Project Coordinator*

Patrick Wang  
*Finance Officer*

Karen Li  
*Administration Officer*

Marina Antonas  
*Inner West Sector Support  
Development and Training Officer*

Jude Borromeo  
*Training Development and  
Communications Officer*





## Bilingual Educators

Christine Ahn  
*Korean*

Grace Matujza  
*Mandarin*

Insang Yu  
*Korean*

Jimena Escobar  
*Spanish*

Louie Leung  
*Cantonese*

Mani Ramasamy  
*Tamil*

Mariette Mikhael  
*Arabic*

Minh Hoang  
*Vietnamese*

Pornthip ChuaiUrachon  
*Thai*

Rebecca Kwai Heung Tsoi  
*Mandarin, Cantonese*

Shayla Shen  
*Mandarin*

Helen Li  
*Mandarin, Cantonese*

Ye Lu  
*Mandarin*

Tania Obeid  
*Arabic*

Trinh Le Nguyen Dieu  
*Vietnamese*

Yasmin Mohamed  
*Arabic*

**We thank the many  
volunteers who give of  
their time so graciously  
for the Ethnic Communities'  
Council of NSW**

