

# ANNUAL REVIEW

## SUMMARY 2024



**Ethnic Communities'  
Council of NSW**

REPRESENTING ALL COMMUNITIES

ANNIVERSARY 1975-2025



**Ethnic Communities'  
Council of NSW**  
REPRESENTING ALL COMMUNITIES

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# Messages of Support



I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW (ECCNSW) on another successful year.

For almost 50 years, the ECCNSW has been at the heart of the diverse communities of NSW.

I pay tribute to your important work in promoting social cohesion in our state through advocacy, education and community development.

Our multicultural communities are stronger and more vibrant thanks to the support of your member organisations.

As Premier, I am proud to lead one of the most culturally diverse states in the world, with our citizens representing more than 310 ancestries and speaking more than 280 languages.

The NSW Government shares your vision for an inclusive society which not only upholds but cherishes multiculturalism. Thanks for your work in making this a reality.

As we approach the end of another year, I encourage you to celebrate your work and achievements over the past 12 months.

I wish you every success for the year ahead.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chris Minns'.

**Chris Minns MP**  
**Premier of New South Wales**



In the 49 years since the Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW was launched, members and volunteers have worked towards bringing people together.

Representing many community organisations, the Council advocates to promote better outcomes for our CALO children, teenagers, families, seniors and people with disability.

This annual review is a wonderful opportunity to thank everyone at the Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW for their contributions towards building a more cohesive and harmonious society.

The NSW Government has been proud to work with the Ethnic Communities Council of NSW on a range of initiatives over the years.

I commend you for your achievements and wish the Council all the best as it heads towards its golden anniversary next year.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steve Kamper'.

**Steve Kamper MP**  
**Minister for Multiculturalism**



Mark Speakman SC MP



Mark Coure MP



Joseph La Posta



Nick Kaldas APM

On behalf of the NSW Opposition, we extend our deep appreciation to the Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW (ECCNSW) and congratulations on another successful year.

The ECCNSW remain a fundamental partner in delivering a range of programs and services that strengthen the multicultural fabric of New South Wales and deliver targeted and tailored initiatives for culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities. ECCNSW continues to represent multilingual, multi-faith, and multicultural communities in policy discussions around cost of living, affordable housing and employment assistance.

It is so important for Parliamentarians and community leaders to work together to achieve solutions to common issues within our multicultural and multi-faith society. Bodies like the ECCNSW serve as a bridge between decision-makers and the broader community, helping us to deliver for everyone in New South Wales.

We thank the staff and volunteers of the ECCNSW for all they do to advocate on behalf of our multicultural and multi-faith communities. The NSW Opposition is proud to continue to work with and support the Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW and we look forward to continuing to grow our strong collaborative relationship.

Multicultural NSW extends its heartfelt congratulations to the Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW for your outstanding work in promoting diversity, inclusion and empowerment within our state's multicultural communities over the past 12 months.

We commend you for taking on an important component of the 2024-2027 Settlement Engagement and Transition Support project. The Settle In, Skill Up initiative will help newly arrived women from non-English speaking backgrounds to settle in Australia, and older migrants to overcome isolation and loneliness by improving their digital literacy skills.

We also applaud you for adding your weight in support of a variety of good causes, such as giving people a voice in efforts to promote the rights of older people and adults with disability, promoting the National Bowel Cancer Screening Program and working to counter child sexual abuse.

Thank you, too, for supporting Multicultural NSW's Safe Places for Faith Communities program. Your *Worship in a Safe Place* project has furthered our aims to enhance safety and security at places of worship and helped to make three temples safer spaces for congregants.

We also pause to honour the memory of Mr Jack Passaris OAM, a founding member of the ECCNSW. His vision and dedication helped to shape the Council into the organisation it is today - one that cares and gets things done. We are also saddened by the loss of another early member of the ECCNSW and warrior for multiculturalism, Mr Ian Lacey AM. Vale to them both.

**Mark Speakman SC MP**  
Leader of the  
Opposition

**Mark Coure MP**  
Shadow Minister  
for Multiculturalism

**Nick Kaldas APM**  
Chairperson  
Multicultural NSW  
Advisory Board

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

# Chair's Message



Peter Doukas OAM,  
Chair

I write this report at the conclusion of the momentous year in the history of the Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW. We have had significant highs and lows which have affected not only the operation of our organisation but in fact its future as well. The Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW as the peak body representing multicultural communities has continued to live up to its charter and its mission in the years 2023 through to 2024. Most significantly, we embarked and successfully concluded the process of becoming a Company Limited by Guarantee which will allow us to better serve our Members and interact with both the private government and NGO Sector through the structure of a Company Limited by Guarantee.

It should be acknowledged that the 2023 and 2024 the Board dedicated a substantial amount of its time and deliberations in achieving this significant goal. I am also particularly grateful to our Secretary Mr Glen Falkenstein and the CEO Ms Mary Karras, who will also act as the Company Secretary, for their dedication and professionalism in steering this significant change.

The Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW will no longer be an Incorporated Association but is now a Company Limited by Guarantee and will be known as the Ethnic Communities Council of NSW Limited. All other information will remain the same. We have already undertaken a slight rebrand to further inform our Members and allow them to adapt to this new structure. I thank the Members for their patience in this time of transition, noting the need to reorganise and reschedule our General Meetings and Members Forums, following the regulatory requirements of this change.

Throughout my time as Chair of ECCNSW I have been privileged to have a committed Board of Management and Executive, who have dedicated their time as volunteers to the efficient management of the organisation. The Board did not miss a single meeting since its election and at no stage from hybrid Face to Face and In Person Meetings was there any significant decline or variation to our general operations and management of the organisation.

I wish to particularly thank our Deputy Chair, Ms Fiona Passaris who I consider as my right hand, our knowledgeable Secretary Mr Glen Falkenstein, our Treasurer Mr Emanuel Valageorgiou who has overseen our budget so efficiently, and our Youth Chair, Mr Joshua Moses who has been at the forefront of youth issues, as well as the steadfast Board Members who have guided and supported me during this time. On all metrics our organisation has grown and continues to reassert itself as the only truly representative Body representing multicultural communities in this State.

My gratitude and appreciation must also go to arguably the most remarkable person in the multicultural space, Ms Mary Karras has been a stalwart CEO and will celebrate her 10th year at the organisation in 2025. Mary leads a comprehensive and professional team who have been acknowledged for their extraordinary work throughout the operations of the ECCNSW.

Australian Multiculturalism is under threat from internal and external factors as it is organisations like the Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW that preserves the vision of our two giants Gough Whitlam and Malcolm Fraser who presided over the establishment of the Ethnic Communities' Council in 1975.

In 2024 our Council lost one of its most significant Founding Members Mr Jack Passaris OAM. He was present at the Foundation of the Ethnic Communities' Council and extraordinarily, after serving terms as Chair and Deputy Chair, was in office in the Board at the time of his death in 2024. A dedicated period of service extending beyond any requirement, he was made a Life Member of the organisation and at the last AGM that he attended, the Members unanimously agreed to rename the ECCNSW building in Waterloo in his honour. He is being dearly missed by me and by our Members, and his service will never be forgotten.

As we prepare for our 50th Anniversary the Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW accepts the stewardship that it has over our Australian Multicultural Project and of course we will invest in the festivities and the tributes of our achievements to date.

However, in preparing for the next 50 years we are mindful that we live in a very different world where the idea of multiculturalism is under threat. I pledge that the organisation will continue to honour its role as the true independent advocate for this country, as a truly multicultural country, and I am encouraged by the ongoing support of our Members and Supporters. I thank you.

Yours in multiculturalism.

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



# Chief Executive Officer's Message



Mary Karras, CEO

This past year has seen ECCNSW start the journey of transitioning from an Incorporated Association to a non-profit Company Limited by Guarantee. With the unanimous support of members at the AGM in 2023, this historic shift for our organisation after 49 years in operation, strengthens ECCNSW's corporate governance responsibilities and will see it refocus its energies on strategy, risk management, service excellence, member and community engagement and advocacy.

It is indeed an honour and a privilege to have been invited by the Board of Directors to become ECCNSW's inaugural Company Secretary, and I sincerely thank them for entrusting that responsibility to me.

Mission based organisations such as the Ethnic Communities Council of NSW, face constant new challenges and opportunities, and it is important that policies and procedures are revisited, and strategic plans are renewed to ensure adaptability and agility.

We will be embarking on planning and developing the new Strategic Plan during 2025 that will chart our course for three years. We look forward to hearing the voices of our members, and the broader community to help us clarify the vision and mission and identify the community needs and priorities of our multifaith, multilingual and multicultural communities across NSW.

As a statewide peak body, we have provided information dissemination and coordinated several programs and projects this year as evidenced in our reports enclosed in this Annual Review book.

From contributing to high level national and state discussions we have advocated and represented our members and the broader community, in areas that include aged care, multicultural education, race discrimination, disability, child safety, health education, digital inclusion, domestic family and sexual violence, housing and homelessness, utilities (water, gas and electricity) and strata schemes.

ECCNSW continues to champion the importance of the multicultural voice, in informing and shaping policy and sector development.

This year has been extremely difficult for many in our communities. The rising cost of living, mortgage stress, global tensions and diminishing community sentiment are threatening the social fabric of our communities.

Our collaboration with the NSW government agency, Multicultural NSW, through its Multicultural Peaks Program, and the ongoing support of our affiliate ethnic communities councils in the rural and regional areas, has enabled better outcomes for the new and emerging ethnic communities as well as the more well established ethnic communities.



It is my pleasure to have the opportunity to present this Annual Review book to you on what ECCNSW has delivered over the last 12 months.

None of this work could have been delivered, nor the outcomes achieved, without the exceptional commitment, expertise and professionalism of the staff, which includes the pool of bilingual /bi cultural educators that we draw on for community engagement throughout the year. It is their grass connections, language proficiency and cultural expertise that strengthens the work of the ECC NSW, and I thank them for their teamwork and support.

I would like to acknowledge and thank the Board of Directors, for their unwavering commitment, and who as volunteers, have given their time so graciously. I extend my gratitude to the Chair, Mr Peter Doukas OAM for his leadership and resilience, and to the Deputy Chair, Mrs Fiona Mouhtar for her commitment and dedication. Together with the Board, they have been a constant support and strength, and I am forever grateful.

As a state wide peak body, we will continue to prioritise and advocate on behalf of our members, and the broader needs of the multilingual, multifaith and multicultural communities.

The year 2025 will be an amazing year. I look forward to celebrating the incredible 50 year legacy of the Ethnic Communities Council of NSW, along with its members, life members, staff and volunteers, stakeholders and supporters.

**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 & Empower**  
Engage, involve, and empower CALD communities to contribute to, and participate in, all aspects of public life.
- **Collaborate & Partner**  
Collaborate and form partnerships to generate collective action on issues of importance to CALD communities.
- **Lead & Represent**  
Take a leadership role as an advocate for multiculturalism and represent issues of importance to CALD communities to governments and businesses.
- **Strengthen & Build Capacity**  
Strengthen our processes and build organisational capacity to achieve strategic objectives.

## 375 Community Organisations

**49 years** since we were founded by multicultural communities at a Town Hall rally



**\$150,000** the funding we received for 2023-24 from the NSW Government through **Multicultural NSW**



**86%** ethnic community organisations  
**18%** other non-profit organisations  
**9%** multicultural service providers



- 12** staff engaged in **advocacy, policy** and **sector development**
- 1** specialising in **energy reduction** and **climate change**
- 6** generalists working on **state-wide issues**
- 2** specialising in **community care**
- 5** specialising in **capacity building** in **ageing** and in **disability**
- 4** engaged in **media** and **communications**

## 75 Community Representatives



**41**  
ethnicities



**85%** born overseas



**12%**  
refugees



**10** belief systems



**32** language groups that speak all of the most **commonly spoken** languages in NSW

# Education



# Vote Talk Program

The NSW Electoral Commission in its commitment to building trust and confidence in the electoral and democratic systems and processes in NSW, once again collaborated with the ECCNSW to deliver the *Vote Talk* Program for the NSW Local government elections held in September 2024.

The ECCNSW is very proud that the *Vote Talk* Program has consistently delivered in its commitment to addressing barriers that people with culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds may face during elections.

The main aim of the *Vote Talk* Program for the local government elections 2024 was to provide practical education and information, tailored specifically for CALD communities, relating to: checking enrolments, where and when to vote, and how to vote (completing ballot papers).

The Program was delivered by the ECCNSW bilingual educators through face-to-face community information sessions, ethnic radio broadcasts, and ethnic social media platforms. This ECCNSW team of trusted community members successfully delivered 80 face-to-face community engagement sessions in 8 languages namely, Arabic, Cantonese, Mandarin, Vietnamese, Greek, Korean, Hindi and Nepali.



*Vote Talk* session delivered in Mandarin by ECCNSW bilingual educator, Jenny Huang at Campsie



*Vote Talk* session delivered in Korean by ECCNSW bilingual educator, Annie Choi at Eastwood Library

Interviews recorded with ethnic radio stations to broadcast live a few weeks before the elections and were used to promote the NSW Electoral Commission's resources widely through ethnic social media platforms.

Representatives from the NSW Electoral Commission visited several of the community engagement sessions and were most impressed with the delivery of the Program. They also expressed their appreciation of the valuable face to face feedback provided to them during the evaluation feedback sessions held with the entire *Vote Talk* team at the completion of the Program.

The professional approach exhibited by ECCNSW's *Vote Talk* team has reaffirmed the NSW Electoral Commission's trust and confidence in the ECCNSW delivering the *Vote Talk* Program.

As a state wide peak body, our core work is community development and education, we look forward to assisting the Australian Electoral Commission with the upcoming Federal elections in 2025.

## Perceptions across NSW CALD groups on Food Organics and Garden Organics (FOGO) Service

NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) approached the Ethnic Communities Council of NSW to undertake research across culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities to ascertain their perceptions of Food Organics and Garden Organics (FOGO) service.

ECCNSW played a pivotal role in uncovering valuable insights into how different communities perceive and engage with the introduction of the Food Organic Garden Organic (FOGO) service.

The ECCNSW Bilingual educators facilitated interviews in various languages, with 100 participants from 10 ethnic and linguistic groups, where an overwhelming positive support was expressed for the FOGO initiative.

A key achievement was the 84% of participants who expressed positivity toward the FOGO service, with many stating they were more likely to participate after learning more about its benefits.

The insights highlighted critical challenges, including language barriers and concerns around odour and pests, which could hinder adoption of the FOGO service. The findings informed EPA on the importance of culturally sensitive communication strategies to ensure successful community engagement.

The clear message conveyed by participants was that CALD communities prefer culturally diverse, in-language communication methods, with participants suggesting a mix of physical materials, social media, council newsletters, and collaboration with community leaders. By understanding these preferences, the NSW EPA is now better equipped to develop targeted messaging and resources.

ECCNSW's undertaking serves as a model for how tailored, in-language communication







and education can foster greater support for environmental initiatives, ensuring long-term sustainability and community participation in NSW's FOGO service.

To view the full report, go to this link:

<https://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/-/media/epa/corporate-site/resources/waste/24p4517-cald-summary-report-v4.pdf>

## **Bin Trim Networks Program - CALD Social Enterprises Move Towards a Circular Economy**

The ECCNSW's *Bin Trim Networks Program* (BTNP) funded by the NSW Environment Protection authority (EPA) is seeing remarkable success.

The initial phase of the Program has been the recruitment of 40 eligible small businesses from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities, with a particular focus on early learning centres and ethnic-religious associations who were considered small -medium business enterprises.

These businesses were identified as high-potential participants due to their regular food service and subsequent high levels of food waste. The ECCNSW's BTNP Team utilized their bilingual skills and deep cultural understanding to build trust with business owners, overcoming language and cultural barriers to ensure effective communication.

Through persistent outreach efforts, including multiple visits, meetings, and consultations, the ECCNSW BTNP Team successfully onboarded businesses and provided them with clear guidance on sustainable waste management practices. The interactive consultations were critical in ensuring that participants fully understood the project's objectives and were motivated to contribute to its goals.

Once the businesses committed to the Program, each participant received tailored advice, and a customised action plan designed to help them reduce food waste and improve recycling practices.

The early results are promising, with the initial engagement phase raising significant awareness of waste management within the participating businesses.

The next phase involves continued waste assessments, refining action plans, and monitoring the progress of each business. The ECCNSW BTNP Team will provide ongoing support to ensure the successful implementation of these strategies, setting the stage for measurable improvements in waste reduction in the Program's upcoming phases.

Early success demonstrates the power of culturally sensitive approaches to fostering sustainable practices in CALD communities.

# Information Sessions and Focus Groups

## NSW Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC)

The ECCNSW was approached by the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) to deliver six focus groups and six information sessions targeting Arabic, Mandarin, Cantonese, Vietnamese, Korean, and Tagalog-speaking communities. These focus groups were held in Sydney and the Central Coast, taking place in libraries, community centres, and online. In total, 60 participants were involved.

The focus groups were initiated with the understanding that individuals from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds come to Australia with a wide range of experiences concerning corruption and varying governmental systems. Their expectations of public officials are often influenced by these experiences, which can make them vulnerable to corrupt behaviour, or lead them to unknowingly engage in corrupt practices due to a lack of understanding about acceptable norms in Australia.

The primary goal of these focus groups was to gain insight into the CALD communities' understanding of corruption and their awareness of the ICAC's role in investigating

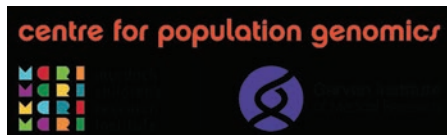
and preventing it. Additionally, the sessions sought to assess the community's knowledge about how to report corrupt conduct and to identify any barriers that might prevent or discourage them from reporting or confronting corruption.

The Commission aimed to explore the most effective ways to communicate with communities. ECCNSW was approached as it is well recognised as having insight into the best mediums for engaging with multi faith, multilingual and multicultural communities, whether through printed materials, websites, internet memes, interviews, presentations, ethnic radio, or other channels.

Through this collaboration the ICAC is able to tailor its messaging to ensure it reaches and resonates with CALD communities effectively.



Arabic focus group, Fairfield Library



## The Our DNA Program

The Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW was approached by the Centre for Population Genomics / Garvan Institute of Medical Research, to play a key role in supporting genomic research referred to as the *Our DNA* Program.

This research aims to address the under representation of many Australian minority ancestry groups in genetics research. This will ensure all communities have equitable access to advances in healthcare.

This research is applying a community based participatory approach and the initial research has commenced with the Vietnamese community, with further CALD groups becoming involved in 2025.



The ECCNSW Vietnamese bilingual educators assisted with delivering research questions in language to help understand the motivations for communities in both genomics research and blood donations.

After completing comprehensive training and obtaining Good Clinical Practice (GCP) certification, the ECCNSW Vietnamese Bilingual educators engaged in community outreach to promote the Program within the Vietnamese community. These educators provided crucial language support, explained the program's goals and benefits, and assisted participants in completing necessary forms during one-stop shop recruitment events.

The bilingual educators also fostered trust within the Vietnamese community, to collect feedback from participants, and contribute to the co-design process, helping improve the community based participatory approach.

ECCNSW looks forward to working with the Population of Genomics in 2025 to make further gains in this significant research.

## ***Be Aware, Be Safe Program*** **for older people from CALD backgrounds**

Funding provided by Transport NSW, through its NSW Community Road Safety Program enabled ECCNSW to achieve remarkable success in empowering CALD older people with a comprehensive road safety initiative.

Over the duration of the *Be Aware, Be Safe* Program, 48 road safety workshops were conducted across 10 LGAs, with a notable participation of 624 older people aged 55 and older. What made this initiative truly impactful was its accessibility.

The workshops were delivered in eight community languages, ensuring older

people from diverse linguistic and religious backgrounds could fully engage. These sessions, which reached older people from a variety of social, religious, faith based and educational groups, were designed to raise awareness of road safety for both pedestrians and drivers, and they did just that.

The real success story lies in the “ripple effect” that followed. Approximately 90% of participants, when contacted three months after the sessions, confirmed that they had shared the knowledge gained with their family, friends, and wider community. This peer-to-peer dissemination of crucial safety information significantly broadened the Program's reach, turning participants into advocates for safer roads.

ECCNSW also leveraged ethnic media, including SBS radio and social media platforms, to further amplify the NSW Road Safety Action Plan, and harnessed its connections with its membership base to enable the Program's impact to spread well beyond the workshop delivery.

The use of translated materials and ethnic media ensured that the project's benefits would endure long after its completion. This Program not only improved road safety awareness but also fostered a model of community driven knowledge sharing that promises to have a lasting effect on CALD communities across NSW.



Community Road Safety Information Session in Mandarin

# Sector Support and Development in Aged Care

## Inner West Sector Support Development and Training Program

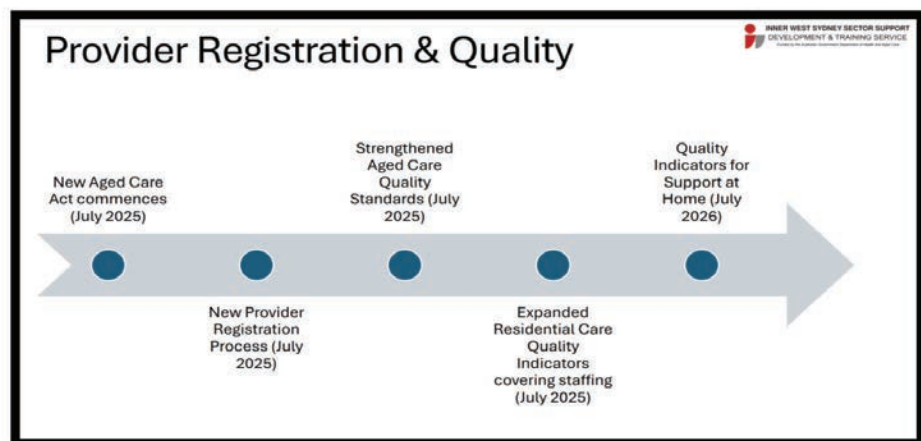
This year, the ECCNSW Inner West Sector Support Development and Training (IWSSD&T) Program has delivered a dynamic array of initiatives, from best practice forums and capacity-building training sessions to workforce development projects and roundtable discussions. These efforts not only empowered volunteers, staff, and board members but also provided critical feedback to the government on upcoming aged care reforms.

The Program, spearheaded by the IWSSD&T Officer, delivered interactive events, forums, and workshops addressing key priorities such as the New Aged Care Act, compliance, governance, workforce recruitment strategies, and briefings for boards i.e. a road map. These initiatives equipped participants with the tools and knowledge needed to begin shaping the future of aged care.

Additionally, in collaboration with the NSW and the National Sector Support Development Officers (SSDOs) and aged care consultants the ECCNSW IWSSD&T Program Officer co-designed specialized training sessions to upskill staff and volunteers from CHSP-funded organizations. These sessions offered practical tools to help the sector effectively plan for and transition to the new aged care system.

## Inner West Region Dementia Community Friendly Alliance

The ECCNSW IWSSD&T Officer is the Chair of the Inner West Region Dementia Community Friendly Alliance. This Alliance has made significant strides in enhancing dementia care pathways and broadening access to aged care services. Several impactful resources for both the community and service providers were created including a multilingual "Pathways to Accessing Services" flyer, and an information card about dementia to be shared with neighbours and friends.



Aged Care Reform Road Map – a resource commissioned by ECCNSW staff member, IWSSD&T Officer and developed by Paul Sadler Consultancy.

These resources will be available on the Inner West Aged Care Services website <https://innerwestagedcareservices.org.au/> to empower communities and bring meaningful change to dementia care.

Recently, the Alliance hosted an engaging event during Dementia Action Week focusing on Brain Health. With 90 participants from across the region in attendance, they engaged with interactive activities and resources designed to promote brain health and raise awareness of dementia. A highlight of the day was the launch of the Inner West Region Dementia Pathways Flyer, available in English and seven other languages to ensure accessibility for the diverse communities

Attendees were treated to an enlightening presentation by experts and interacted with local specialist aged care providers that provided information and resources fostering community connections and collaboration.

The event was a success and underscored the importance of community engagement and education in supporting individuals and their families living with dementia.



Members of the Inner West Region Dementia Community Friendly Alliance



Appreciation certificate awarded to the ECCNSW's IWSSD&T Officer, Marina Antonas, by the CEO of Cultural Community Connections in recognition of her mentorship and support.

## Mentorship and Support

Recognizing that CHSP providers are gearing up for the upcoming changes to the Support at Home Program and its new requirements, the ECCNSW IWSSD&T Officer provided mentorship and support to several inner west region CHSP service providers, by offering insightful feedback, acting as a trusted sounding board, and actively engaging with providers. The ECCNSW's IWSSD&T Officer shared expert advice and practical guidance to help ensure services were future-ready and are aligned with the evolving needs of the sector.



## National Sector Support Development Network

Earlier this year, the ECCNSW's IWSSD&T Officer in collaboration with NSW Sector Support Development Officers hosted a two-day planning meeting that brought together 163 Sector Support Development Officers from across the country.

The event focused on preparing Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) providers for the transition to the new Support at Home Program. Discussions centred on identifying the resources needed for providers and how Sector Support Development Officers can collaborate to ensure a seamless transition and implementation of the new aged care reforms.

The professional exchanges and feedback gathered during these two days laid the groundwork for strengthening the sector's

capacity to navigate the potential challenges and setbacks faced with the new reforms. These insights are expected to guide the successful delivery of these changes in the aged care landscape.

In addition to representations on the SSDO National and local committees and networks, the ECCNSW has played a key role in various influential steering groups and networks. This includes representation on the Aged Care Liaison Group (ACLG) a forum convened by the Department of Health & Aged Care.

This forum is where discussions, information exchange and problem solving with aged care sector partners, can influence programs, policies and reforms.

Additionally, ECCNSW was approached by the Department of Health and Aged Care to invite the IWSSD&T Officer to serve as a moderator for the National Community of Practice intranet. This involves organizing and structuring content within dedicated working groups, uploading crucial information, and encouraging other participants to actively engage in these collaborative efforts.



National Sector Support Development Planning Day  
ECCNSW convened the NSW Sector Support Development Network Hub

## Engagement with Burwood Police Area Command

The ECCNSW recently had the privilege of visiting the Burwood Police Area Command for a meet-and-greet with Police Commander Superintendent Christine McDonald. The ECCNSW's IWSSD&T Officer, together with ECCNSW CEO, shared some of the initiatives in aged care focusing on elder abuse and dementia, currently being delivered by ECCNSW's Sector Support and Development Program. This valuable opportunity allowed the Commander and her Senior Management Team to connect with local key stakeholders and share their strategic approaches to tackling critical issues including elder abuse, mental health, domestic & family violence, and sexual assault.

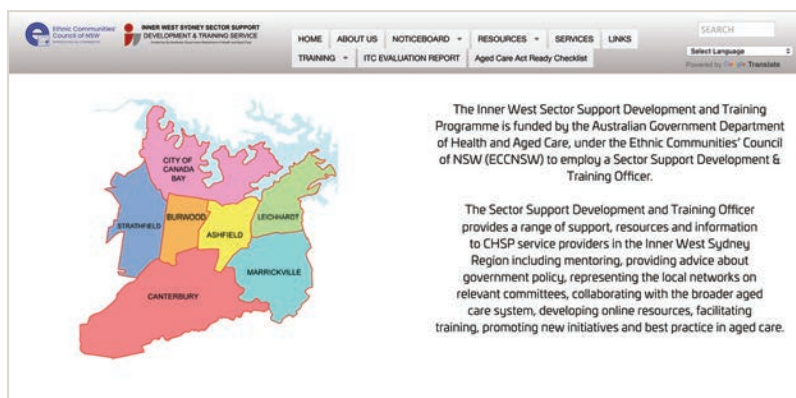
The ECCNSW CEO appreciated the opportunity to explore potential collaborations to better support and safeguard the community, and opening the door for meaningful partnerships in the future.

## Inner West Aged Care Services Website

The ECCNSW's Inner West Aged Care Services website is a vital digital tool for supporting 74 CHSP-funded service providers across Inner West Sydney, along with community members, families, and aged care providers.

The site serves as a one-stop resource for information on aged care services, offering links to valuable publications, local initiatives, and practical tools.

This year saw the addition of new projects and resources with both local and national relevance. These updates included dementia-specific materials, workforce training sessions, and essential resources which helped CHSP providers nationwide to prepare for upcoming reforms and the new Aged Care Act.



Inner West Aged Care Services website resources <https://innerwestagedcareservices.org.au/>

## NSW Multicultural Sector Support (MSSDO) Program

The ECCNSW's Multicultural Sector Support Development (MSSD) Program continued to support culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) aged care providers. In partnership with the NSW Sector Support Development Officers from Central West, Orana Far West and Riverina Murray regions the ECCNSW hosted an on line Roundtable with rural and remote providers, focusing on the unique needs of CALD communities. These discussions informed the development of tailored resources, which were shared with CHSP across NSW via the ECCNSW website.

In collaboration with NSW Sector Support Development Officers the ECCNSW MSSD Officer organized Q&A workshops, and several training sessions designed to help providers better understand the Aged Care Quality Standards and to be more responsive to the needs of CALD communities.

Through online professional development workshops, the MSSD Program empowered CALD CHSP providers to implement culturally sensitive strategies and forge meaningful partnerships within the broader aged care system, reaching both metropolitan hubs and rural and remote communities across NSW.

Throughout the year, the ECCNSW's MSSD Officer in partnership with other Sector Support and Development Officers, hosted a series of highly successful information sessions for diverse CALD communities, reaching over 70 participants per session.

Delivered in Mandarin, Cantonese, Greek, and Arabic, these sessions provided invaluable translated resources to help attendees navigate the aged care system with confidence. By empowering older individuals and their families with the knowledge and tools needed to make informed decisions about their present and future care needs, these sessions made a significant impact on the community.



Aged Care Information Session held in Canada Bay for the Chinese Community facilitated by Ye Lu, an ECCNSW Bilingual Educator.



# Digital Literacy

## Tech Savvy for Seniors Program: Empowering Seniors with Digital Skills

The Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW proudly celebrated its 10th year of the *Tech Savvy for Seniors* (TSS) Program. In collaboration with the State Library, NSW Department of Communities and Justice, and Telstra, this Program is dedicated to bridging the digital divide, equipping seniors with essential skills that foster social connections and enhance independence.

This year, the *Tech Savvy for Seniors* Program truly expanded its horizons. With 394 sessions hosted in 35 libraries throughout the Greater Sydney area, it engaged a remarkable 2,691 seniors. Of these sessions, 228 were specially designed for multicultural communities, while 166 catered to English-speaking participants. The Program's multilingual approach included offerings in languages such as Arabic, Mandarin, Cantonese, Vietnamese, Korean, Hindi, Bengali, Mongolian, Nepalese, Greek, Italian, Spanish and Ukrainian, ensuring that seniors from diverse backgrounds felt welcome and supported.

Led by the talented ECCNSW Bilingual Team, the curriculum was rich and varied, covering topics crucial for everyday life. Participants learned how to connect with loved ones via social media, unlock the full potential of their iPhones and iPads, and navigate online banking and shopping safely. They also discovered how to use digital maps for public transport, explore health and fitness apps, engage in Zoom calls, and protect their personal information online.

The impact of this Program went beyond just acquiring digital skills. It became a lively social hub where participants made new friends and actively engaged in their communities. Being digitally connected opened exciting possibilities, from convenient online shopping



Lionel Bowen Library Cantonese Program

and effortless bill payments to planning dream vacations with just a few clicks.

*"Before joining the Tech Savvy for Seniors Program, I often felt overwhelmed by technology. I struggled to stay in touch with my family and was hesitant to try log online. Thanks to the wonderful instructors and this great program, I learned how to use social media to connect with my grandchildren and my family overseas. This program has not only made me more confident with technology but has also helped me to feel empowered and more independent than ever!"*

Chao- Mandarin program

The Program also championed lifelong learning and community building, providing seniors with the opportunity to deepen their existing knowledge while gaining new skills. This educational journey fostered a profound sense of achievement and belonging, greatly enhancing their overall well-being.

*"The Tech Savvy Senior Program has changed my life. I never thought I could learn so much, and the friendly support made all the difference. I feel empowered and connected"*

Huda-Arabic program

By addressing the unique digital needs of seniors, the *Tech Savvy for Seniors* Program 2024 has made a lasting and meaningful impact, promoted digital inclusion and ensured that seniors remain active, engaged, and empowered members of society.





# Community Development

# Community Development Programs

## *Pathway to Personal Development and Success (PPDS) for Tamil and Thai speaking women*

ECCNSW made significant strides in empowering newly arrived women aged between 30 -64 years of age, from Thai-speaking and Tamil-speaking communities. These women, many of whom faced challenges such as low English proficiency and social isolation, were the focus of ECCNSW's *Pathway to Personal Development and Success* (PPDS) Program.

This initiative was funded by the Department of Home Affairs, through its Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship Program Fostering Integration grants.

Participants developed vital skills in areas including job readiness, economic literacy, business ownership, and understanding Australian society and cultural norms. Information sessions and workshops boosted their confidence and helped them integrate more smoothly into Australian civic and economic life.

One of the standout achievements was the focus on citizenship education, which demystified the process of becoming Australian citizens and inspired many participants to pursue it.

Furthermore, training in digital literacy, financial planning, and cyber safety enhanced participants' ability to navigate both their financial and online worlds, promoting long-term security and independence.

Emphasis on reducing social isolation was key focus, and participants were able to harness strong support networks and build connections.



*Thai Women's Group – Employment Ability skills session delivered by TAFE NSW*

In addition, the development of small business skills, fostered entrepreneurial growth, and encouraged small social enterprises, potentially driving local economic benefits.

The ECCNSW was proud to deliver the *Pathway to Personal Development and Success* (PPDS) Program as it equipped participants with the tools and confidence to succeed in Australia, and provided pathways for women to become integrated, empowered, and connected to their new home.

## **Cancer Screening: Prevention, Take the Offer Program**

The Ethnic Communities Council of NSW has a long-standing commitment to helping multicultural communities better understand their health needs, and has delivered many health information sessions in language to communities over the years.

In partnership with Cancer Institute NSW, *Prevention, Take the Offer* Program the ECCNSW engaged Assyrian, Vietnamese, and Urdu-speaking individuals in the Sydney metropolitan areas, and multicultural communities in the Illawarra, to better understand the health benefits of free cancer screening.

The target age groups involved in this program were 50 to 74 year old, for bowel and breast screening, and 25 to 74 year old for cervical screening.

The Program covered large areas of Sydney metropolitan areas and Illawarra, and included locations such as community hubs and local libraries which provide a familiar, convenient, and comfortable environment for participants.

By facilitating sessions in language, several barriers that people experience utilising health services were identified. These included limited awareness of cancer screening and early detection, religious and spiritual beliefs, privacy concerns, accessing health care due to closure of women's health centres, and the fear of diagnosis and treatment. The most consistent barriers identified in the sessions were language and culture.

At the completion of the Program, 239 participants in total were involved. However, the benefits reached more than just the 239 participants as they had also pledged to inform five of their family members or friends about these screening programs. This "ripple effect" impacted a larger number of community members from these language groups and beyond.

In addition to information sessions, the Program enabled collaboration with SBS Radio who promoted awareness through Arabic, Vietnamese, and Urdu broadcast programs.

This strategic initiative aimed to boost participation in cancer screening programs among culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities and contributed towards the increased knowledge of three key screening programs, particularly cervical screening.



After booking for breast screening



Assyrian group, Fairfield Library



Breast screening session, multicultural group, Wollongong

Delivering information in one's own language enhances understanding, engagement, and confidence. Participants were encouraged to promote these screening programs within their communities. The introduction of at-home test kits/self-collection methods helped overcome reluctance toward cervical screening, boosting confidence and motivation. The Program also emphasized the importance of HPV vaccination for future generations.

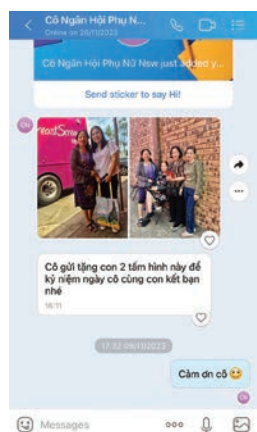
*"Before attending the information session , I didn't know much about cervical screening or the HPV vaccine. Learning in my language made a huge difference – I feel confident now to take care of my health and encourage others in my community to do the same."*

Urdu participant/ Bankstown Community Hub

The Program highlighted valuable lessons, particularly the importance of culturally sensitive approaches and accessible information in overcoming barriers to participation.

As a result of this Program, the NSW Cancer Institute received insightful feedback including the need for awareness campaigns

to educate multicultural, multifaith and multi-lingual communities about cancer screening, the importance of offering more female practitioners in health centres, the continuing efforts to provide at-home screening options to ease discomfort and privacy concerns,



Message to participants in a Vietnamese group

and most importantly, the vital need for addressing cultural and religious beliefs in health education and providing multilingual resources to improve participation rates in screening programs.

## Safe Places for Faith Communities Program *Worship in a Safe Place*

Multicultural NSW provided funding to Ethnic Communities Council of NSW to deliver the *Worship in a Safe Place* Program.

The Program has achieved notable progress in enhancing the safety and security of three identified places of worship, including two Thai Buddhist temples and one Hindu temple.

This initiative targets faith communities that often face unique vulnerabilities, particularly around language barriers and access to mainstream safety support. By focusing on tailored security measures, the Program empowers these communities to safely practice their faith without fear.

During its early stages, a comprehensive needs assessment was conducted to identify security concerns. Collaborating closely with community leaders and conducting site visits, the ECCNSW gained a deep understanding of the specific challenges faced by the temples.

As a result, security enhancement plans are now being developed, focusing on the installation of essential infrastructure such as CCTV systems, intruder alarms, and access controls.

The next stage of the Program emphasises capacity building through training programs in security awareness and emergency response. Delivered in community languages and supported by the ECCNSW bilingual educators, workshops will increase preparedness and resilience among temple





staff and volunteers. Community engagement activities, including workshops and outreach, will also foster solidarity and raise awareness of safety issues, encouraging active participation in protecting places of worship.

ECCNSW is committed to building safer, more resilient communities, and this Program demonstrates the importance of collaborations. With strong partnerships and the trust of local authorities, the Program is well on its way to creating secure environments where faith communities feel empowered and protected.

## Settlement Engagement and Transition Support Program (SETS)

### *Settle In, Skill Up (SISU)*

ECCNSW is proud to announce it successfully applied for funding of the Settlement Engagement and Transition Support (SETS) Program, funded by the Department of Home Affairs for the period 2024-2027.

This grant underscores ECCNSW's ongoing commitment to supporting vulnerable migrant groups in their settlement journey. Through this funding, ECCNSW will embark on its *Settle In, Skill Up (SISU)* initiative, a comprehensive Program designed to address

the distinct needs of newly arrived women and isolated older migrants from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities.

The SISU initiative will focus on empowering newly arrived women from Tamil, Urdu, Nepali, and African communities by offering culturally tailored programs that enhance job readiness, economic literacy, and cultural awareness. This holistic approach aims to equip participants with the necessary tools to succeed in the workforce and integrate into Australian society. Furthermore, for older migrants aged 50 and above, the program will prioritise digital literacy training to reduce social isolation and improve their ability to stay connected with family and friends online.

A key feature of the SISU Program is its whole of community approach, which emphasises collaboration and inclusivity in achieving successful settlement outcomes. By fostering confidence and resilience, this initiative will empower participants to actively contribute to Australian social and economic life, enhancing their overall well-being and integration.

The SETS grant represents a significant milestone in ECCNSW's efforts to support vulnerable communities and ensure their successful transition into Australian society.



Attendance at a SETS training session

# Family Safety Program: Men Against Violence Program

The Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW (ECCNSW) has been consistently delivering the Men Against Violence (MAV) Program over the last six years across multicultural communities in Western Sydney, specifically Auburn, Bankstown, Blacktown, Liverpool and Parramatta areas.

This has been the final year of its implementation, and we are grateful to the Department of Social Services (DSS) for maintaining this funding since 2018.

Domestic, family and sexual violence is pervasive and insidious and the key to changing attitudes and behaviours is to work alongside men within communities. They can become the pipeline for change, by challenging current perceptions towards domestic, family and sexual violence in their communities.

The model used for this Program was to engage and train Wellbeing Connectors to empower men from Arabic, Assyrian, Dinka, Sudanese, Tamil, and Punjabi backgrounds

These Wellbeing Connectors were trusted and connected men in their communities. The conversations they facilitated were in language and enabled open discussions on men's wellbeing, identifying triggers, understanding dowry abuse and fostering a better understanding of Australian law that helped with changing their attitudes and behaviours towards women and children.

Over the six years the ECCNSW Wellbeing Connectors conducted over 660 meaningful conversations with 3560 men at various informal gatherings such as coffee shops, parks and places of worship. Of these, 90% pledged their support and spoke to another five men in their communities.

The following are testimonials from the men who participated in the MAV Program, that demonstrate their benefits of this Program:

*"I used to believe that a man's role was to provide for his family while the woman took care of the household. It was how I was raised, and I never questioned it. But then, through the MAV program and the conversations during the MAV sessions, I started to see things differently. I began to realize that my wife had dreams and aspirations just like me, and it wasn't fair for me to hold her back. It made me realize that true partnership means supporting each other's dreams and aspirations, regardless of gender. I'm grateful for the opportunity to challenge my old beliefs and embrace a more equal and empowering relationship with my wife."*

45 year old Assyrian participant.

*"The Wellbeing Connectors helped convey the messaging that domestic and family violence cannot be excused or justified under any circumstances. All victims, regardless of their gender, need compassionate and highly responsive support and all perpetrators must be held accountable for their violence."*

*"This wouldn't have happened if I hadn't been involved in the conversations with the Wellbeing Connectors who highlighted what abuse and domestic violence is. I learned more about equality and human rights, and I took all the necessary steps to change myself to become a different person to the way I grew up."*

38 year old Tamil participant.

The MAV Program was one of the many significant responses to domestic, family and sexual violence that the government has been funding to community organisations, the justice system and specialist DV services to help combat this issue across communities.

The ECCNSW has provided the Department of Social Services four in-language YouTube videos (Punjabi, Assyrian, Sudanese and Arabic) that can be used as a resource, as well as a several case studies and deep reflective learnings as a result of this Program.

# Speak My Language (Disability) Program

Stories are not just memorable, they are also transformative.

The *Speak My Language (Disability)* Program is in its fifth year of national funding, and continues to share the stories of culturally diverse people living well with a disability so it can help make multicultural Australia more inclusive. Led by the Ethnic Communities Council of New South Wales, the program is the first to ever be delivered via an historic partnership between all State and Territory Ethnic and Multicultural Communities' Councils across Australia.

Since the Program was first funded in 2019, it has shared over 490 interviews promoting accessibility and inclusion within CALD communities. By harnessing the power of on-demand streaming and community radio, the Program has amplified the voices of people with disabilities from migrant and Indigenous Australian communities.

Between 2023-24, the Program was granted an extension by the Commonwealth Department of Social Services in order to meet its radio broadcast targets, which were disrupted during the pandemic period.

Through the distribution of purpose-made radio episodes in four languages, each state and territory met or exceeded its broadcast KPIs by partnering with local community radio stations. In total, the Program hit 500 broadcasts during the extension period.

Additionally, the Program's full suite of 490+ podcasts were promoted through advertising with CALD radio, print and digital media, as well as community engagement activities through events, e-communications and stakeholder collaborations. These promotion efforts contributed to the growing reach of the podcasts, which have now been downloaded by 6,000 listeners online.

In early 2024, the Program undertook an extensive nation-wide survey of Arabic,



Tracy, Cantonese Storyteller with her guide dog

Spanish, Turkish and Vietnamese listeners to better understand the impact of *Speak My Language (Disability)*. In total, 75 people participated in the survey, providing feedback on the radio episodes aired in the extension activity period. 99% of all listeners agreed that they learned about places, activities and information that people with disabilities can enjoy or use across Australia.

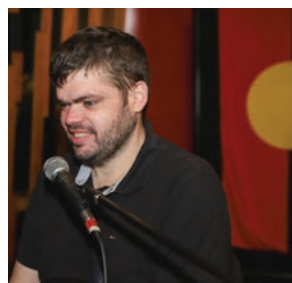
After listening to the radio stories, 24% of listeners surveyed went on to listen to more podcasts online of their own volition. This shows that close to a quarter of listeners surveyed were eager to hear further stories beyond the radio interviews they were requested to listen to, reflecting the engaging value of the material.

As one Turkish listener explained,

*"It is very validating to hear people speak about disability in my mother tongue. I didn't know how to talk about disability in Turkish very well before – but now I have some words to look up and use when speaking about myself to family and friends."*

Ayşe, Turkish Listener





Brian, Indigenous Australian  
Storyteller at Koori Radio Station

During the Extension Activity Period of 2023-24, ECCNSW also piloted an Indigenous radio component in a partnership with the Gadigal Information Service, based in Redfern, Sydney. The Koori Radio Station was engaged as a broadcast partner to produce and air stories featuring First Nations people living well with a disability. In March 2024, during Harmony Week, 6 original stories were broadcasted on Koori Radio featuring six First Nations people from NSW metropolitan and regional areas of Sydney.

The success of the NSW Pilot has now opened up the opportunity for a national partnership with SBS Audio and NITV to take place during the remainder of 2024.

This national partnership will share stories of seven First Nations people with disabilities from around Australia. The participating storytellers reside in New South Wales, Victoria, Northern Territory, Tasmania and Queensland, in both metropolitan and regional areas, promoting services like parasports, accessible arts and writing programs, recreational activities and advocacy initiatives.

One of the Program's Indigenous storytellers, Uncle Paul Constable Calcott, was commissioned by ECCNSW to produce an artwork for the series, entitled *Bundyi Giilang* (*Sharing a Story*).

The painting depicts footprints that reflect the different disabilities of individuals as they

journey through life, coming to sit and yarn together through the *Speak My Language (Disability)* Program. Their shared stories are stored on a message stick, which are collected and shared respectfully through the podcast series. The reds and oranges reflect the land and the blues represent the saltwater and freshwater, along with the greens for the hinterland and bush mob.

As a result of the outcomes achieved in this Program, the funding body has agreed to grant a further extension of its activities until June 2025.

In addition to more radio content, *Speak My Language (Disability)* will be sharing new stories via video-podcasts, which will be delivered nationally through a social media campaign. What's more, the Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW has partnered with Deaf Australia to produce an Auslan video-series, featuring CALD members of the Deaf Community sharing their lived experience through Australian sign language – a language in its own right.

*Speak My Language (Disability)* Program has challenged stereotypes, built capacity across more than twenty CALD communities and addressed the gap in the multicultural and disability sectors. More importantly, it's made it possible for culturally diverse people with disabilities to make the most of life.

# Advocacy



## Energy Advocacy

Every five years the regulated energy businesses (the distribution and transmission businesses – the ‘poles and wires’ businesses) in each state have to get approval for the next five year’s revenue expectations from the Australian Energy Regulator (AER). These are complex financial and technical documents and are assessed by the AER which determines how much each business can recover from consumers over the next five-year period. This process is called a ‘revenue reset’ and is done on a rotating basis across the National Energy Market (NEM) states and territories (Queensland, NSW, ACT, Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia).

For the past three years, ECCNSW, through its Energy Advocate and the ECCNSW bi-lingual educator and facilitator team has worked with the three NSW distribution businesses (Ausgrid, Endeavour and Essential) as well as the NSW transmission business Transgrid to deliver the most extensive consumer engagement program ever undertaken by energy businesses in Australia and probably in the world.

The various programs undertaken by the four businesses included extensive CALD specific customer engagement, in language and undertaken by the ECCNSW bilingual team. The CALD engagement and focus group work included both domestic and small business consumers for the first time and sets a high bar for future revenue resets which are being undertaken in Victoria and Queensland currently.

The NSW businesses have recognised the value in initiating customer conversations early and have started the processes for the next round on revenue discussions for the 2029-2034 period. ECCNSW will continue to have a voice on the customer

councils of those businesses and provide CALD specific advice and guidance through them. Endeavour, as part of its customer discussions during the reset, undertook to provide customer-centric fact sheets on electricity tariffs to provide easier to understand material on this rather complex area. Customer focus groups have been set up to co-design the fact sheets and there will be CALD specific groups undertaken in language by ECCNSW facilitators in the future.

As noted previously, the Australian Energy Regulator (AER) has also engaged the ECCNSW bi-lingual team to assist it in providing ‘in language’ information for CALD consumers looking for a better deal on their electricity and gas (see <https://energymadeeasy.gov.au>) as well as information on energy efficiency methods and what to do if their energy retailer runs into difficulty. This work continues with our educators providing valuable insights to the regulator in the ongoing work in this area.

The ECCNSW Energy Advocate and CEO are members of a range of energy business customer consultative councils and groups (the three NSW Electricity Distribution businesses Ausgrid, Endeavour and Essential Energy, the NSW Electricity transmission business Transgrid, the retailer AGL and Jemena Gas Network). The Advocate is also a member of the AER Customer Consultative Group (AER CCG), the Healthy and Affordable Homes Coalition (HAH) and the Justice and Equity Centre’s (formerly the Public Interest Advocacy Centre) Energy and Water Consumers’ Advocacy Program (EWCAP). The Advocate joins 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.

## Endeavor Peak Customer and Stakeholder Committee

The Ethnic Communities Council of NSW has a representative on the Peak Customer and Stakeholder Committee (PCSC), advocating for culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities.

The PCSC serves as a key advisory body, bringing together customer advocates, stakeholder representatives, and senior decision-makers to provide strategic oversight and guidance. This collaboration supports Endeavour Energy's mission of powering communities for a brighter future and aligns with their vision to lead in delivering smarter energy solutions.

The ECCNSW is pleased to be invited to sit on this committee as it offers a platform for customers and stakeholders to voice their preferences and needs, fostering a vital connection between Endeavour Energy and the communities it serves.

Through this collaborative structure, the ECCNSW works closely with PCSC to ensure the voices of CALD customers and stakeholders are heard and that plans are refined as solutions are co-created to address CALD customer needs.

By building trust and nurturing positive relationships, the committee plays a critical role in improving customer outcomes.



## Other representations on Advisory Boards, Reference Groups, Roundtables and Committees

ECCNSW sits on:

- Department of Communities and Justice
- Sydney Water
- Department of Education
- Jemena Gas
- Multicultural NSW Peaks Group
- City of Sydney Multicultural Panel
- Department of Health and Aged Care
- Ministerial Council on Domestic Family and Sexual Violence
- NSW Electoral Commission
- National Office of Child Safety
- Lifespan Health and Wellbeing Research Centre Macquarie University
- Sydney Institute of Community Languages
- NSW Police Area Commands
- Strata Stakeholders Roundtable



# Digital Media

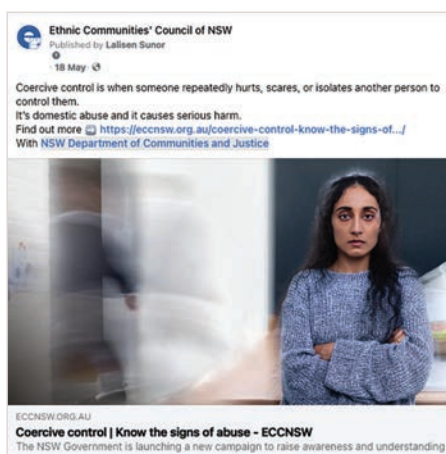
ECCNSW has effectively engaged its members, stakeholders, and wider communities through digital media channels, including newsletters, website articles, and social media platforms. These channels have played a key role in sharing advocacy efforts, promoting health initiatives, and supporting community development programs.

## Key Campaigns and Collaborations

- **Cancer Institute NSW Prevention, Take the Offer! Campaign**  
ECCNSW collaborated with Cancer Institute NSW to raise awareness about Bowel, Breast, and Cervical cancer screenings in multicultural communities, such as the information sessions in multiple languages held for the Assyrian (Fairfield), Vietnamese (Fairfield and Inner West), Urdu (Canterbury and Bankstown), and Illawarra communities. These sessions were promoted via a social media campaign to boost participation in screening programs.
- **Coercive Control Awareness Campaign**  
In partnership with the NSW Department of Communities and Justice, ECCNSW joined a social media campaign to raise awareness about coercive control, highlighting legal rights and support services available to victims, particularly in culturally diverse communities.
- **Cultural Festival Promotion**  
ECCNSW showcased major cultural events such as the Chithirai Festival, Multicultural Eid Festival, and Lunar New Year Festival. Social media and website articles helped promote these celebrations, fostering cultural understanding and community cohesion.



Information sessions on Bowel, Breast and Cervical Screening for Multicultural Communities



Shared post on coercive control



Sydney Chithirai Festival 2024

Looking ahead, ECCNSW will continue to expand its digital media presence, ensuring that our advocacy, health promotion, and cultural celebration efforts reach an even wider audience. As we enter a new phase of digital engagement, ECCNSW will explore new ways to use social media and its website to facilitate dialogue, promote inclusivity, and further support the diverse communities of New South Wales.

The past year has seen significant engagement in ECCNSW's digital communications, with a strong focus on advocacy, education, and cultural promotion. These efforts are an integral part of its mission to represent and support the multicultural communities of New South Wales, and ECCNSW looks forward to continuing its work in the years ahead.



Above and below: Multicultural Eid Festival 2024



# 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 2024 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 2024

	FY 2024 \$	FY 2023 \$
<strong>INCOME</strong>		
Grants	3,053,277	3,408,848
Interest Received	70,693	18,508
Membership Fees	4,078	5,465
Rent Income	1 04,871	104,639
Unexpended Funds Rollover	1 64,792	(829,518)
Sundry Income & Service Fees	7 14,237	602,315
<strong>TOTAL INCOME</strong>	<strong>4,111,948</strong>	<strong>3,310,259</strong>
<strong>EXPENDITURE</strong>		
Administration	882,940	605,667
Audit Fees	4,000	3,900
Bank Charges	459	785
Building Expenses	309,075	158,359
Computer, Support & Software	47,943	49,432
Insurance	17,796	10,593
Media & Web Design	21,836	15,636
Projects' Resources	140,127	80,008
Employees & Contractors Expenses	2,423,399	2,252,361
<strong>TOTAL EXPENSES</strong>	<strong>3,847,574</strong>	<strong>3,176,741</strong>
Surplus (Deficit) before income tax	264,374	133,517
Surplus (Deficit) after income tax	264,374	133,517
Retained earnings at the beginning of the financial year	1,435,637	1,302,119
Retained earnings at the end of the financial year	1,700,011	1,435,637



## Balance Sheet 30 June 2024

	FY 2024 \$	FY 2023 \$
<b>ASSETS</b>		
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	3,983,920	3,608,395
Trade and Other Receivables	83,756	76,553
Prepayments	14,851	15,177
Total CURRENT ASSETS	4,082,527	3,700,125
NON-CURRENT ASSETS		
Property, Plants and equipment	2,300,000	2,300,000
Total NON-CURRENT ASSETS	2,300,000	2,300,000
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>6,382,527</b>	<b>6,000,125</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>		
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Trade and Other Payables	253,426	272,482
Provision for Employees	225,849	196,903
Unexpended Funds Rollover next year	2,008,241	2,173,033
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	2,487,516	2,642,418
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Building/Vehicle Improvement Reserve	405,000	132,070
Total NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES	405,000	132,070
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>\$2,892,516</b>	<b>2,774,488</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$3,490,011</b>	<b>3,225,637</b>
<b>EQUITY</b>		
Reserves	1,790,000	1,790,000
Retained Earnings	\$1,700,011	1,435,637
<b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>	<b>\$3,490,011</b>	<b>3,225,637</b>

# Board of Management



**Peter Doukas OAM**  
Chair



**Fiona Mouhtaris**  
Deputy Chair



**Emanuel Valageorgiou**  
Treasurer



**Glen Falkenstein**  
Secretary



**Joshua Moses**  
Youth Chair



**George Bouteris**  
Board Member



**Christine Lynch OAM**  
Assistant Secretary



**Sam Pashalis**  
Assistant Secretary



**Abbas Alvi**  
Board Member



**Vale Jack Passaris OAM**  
Board Member &  
Founding Life Member



**Ada Cheng**  
Board Member



**Suellyn Lin**  
Board Member



**Indarjit Khuman**  
Board Member &  
Life Member



**Siddique Panwala**  
Board Member



**Amir Salem OAM**  
Board Member



**Mary Karras**  
CEO

# 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 its 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

# Members' Forum 2023-2024

Abbas Alvi  
Ada Cheng  
Amir Salem OAM  
Arbin Lal  
Christine Lynch OAM  
Con Pavlou  
Emanuel Valageorgiou  
Fiona Mouhtaris  
Fotini Loukis  
George Bouteris  
Georgia Anastasopoulos  
Glen Falkenstein  
Indarjit Khuman  
Irene Passaris  
Vale Jack Passaris OAM  
Joshua Moses

Maria Georgiou  
Maria Lillis  
Maria Markos  
Mary Karras  
Patrice Laskas  
Patty Markos  
Paul Tsanis  
Peter Doukas OAM  
Peter Onisforou  
Sajana Nand  
Sam Pashalis  
Siddique Panwala  
Steve Mouhtaris  
Suellyn Lin  
Vasiliki Laskas

## Life Membership Bestowed

George Wojak AO, MBE  
Eddie Raiss  
Ross Tzannes AM  
Angela Chan  
Vale Jack Passaris OAM  
Vale Ian Lacey AM  
Josie Lacey OAM  
Vale George Varughese  
Anthony Pun OAM  
Indarjit Khuman  
Vale Jon Soemarjono  
Mahrukh Batliwalla

# Staff and Volunteers

## Staff List

### **Mary Karras**

*Chief Executive Officer*

### **Marina Antonas**

*Inner West Sector Support Development and Training Officer*

### **Natalie Phan**

*Inner West Sector Support Development and Training SSD Support Officer*

### **Vanessa Papastavros**

*National Program Manager  
Speak My Language (Disability)*

### **Esther Lozano**

*Digital Communications*

### **Louise Easson**

*Media and Communications Officer*

### **Mariette Mikhael**

*Program Coordinator*

### **Christine Ahn**

*Program Coordinator*

### **Fadi Nemme**

*Men Against Violence (MAV) Program Coordinator*

### **Patricia Vaz**

*Vote Talk Officer*

### **Iain Maitland**

*Energy Advocate*

### **Patrick Wang**

*Financial Officer*

### **Karen Li**

*Administration Officer*

### **Rosa Stathis**

*Community Engagement Adviser*

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



Mary Karras  
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Christine Ahn



Marina Antonas



Louise Easson



Karen Li



Esther Lozano



Iain Maitland



Mariette Mikhael



Fadi Nemme



Vanessa Papastavros



Natalie Phan



Rosa Stathis



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Patrick Wang



## Bilingual Educators

### Arabic

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Rageed Tater  
Fida Al Haddad  
Yasmin Ibrahim Mohamed

### Cantonese/ Mandarin

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Natalie Chau

### Cantonese

Louie Leung  
Emerald Ng

### Greek

Antonios Ampatzis  
Poppy Gerakios

### Italian

Francesca Cutrupi

### Korean

Misook Ahn  
Annie Choi  
John Kim  
Insang Yu

### Hindi

Patricia Vaz

### Mandarin

Ye Lu  
Jing Grace Lu  
Jenny Huang  
Wenyíng Han

### Nepalese

Rishi Acharya  
Deepnarsingh Basnet

### Spanish

Jimena Escobar

### Tamil

Mani Ramasamy  
Jayanthi Purushotham

### Thai

Kamonwan Namwongsa

### Turkish

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Asli Alca

### Urdu

Marium Khan

### Vietnamese

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## MAV Wellbeing Connectors

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### Sudanese

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# ETHNIC COMMUNITIES' COUNCIL OF NSW

