



**Ethnic Community
Services Co-operative**
A voice for diversity and inclusion

**ANNUAL
REPORT
2023**



Acknowledgement of Country

**Nya wawa ECSC, baya didjarigura,
Cadigal Wangal Ora, nya djalgala nura,
wiring guwul ora.**

We at ECSC, would like to say thank you, to the Cadigal and Wangal People, for letting us share your land, we promise to look after it.

ECSC would like to acknowledge the Cadigal and Wangal clans of the Eora Nation as the traditional custodians of the land on which we work. We recognise the strength, resilience and capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and pay our respect to Elders past, present and emerging across Australia.

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Cover and throughout: Photographs taken at various ECSC events.

Introduction

For over four decades Ethnic Community Services (ECSC) has been working with multicultural communities to support their knowledge of and access to the kinds of services and benefits that all Australians enjoy. And as communities change and emerging migrant populations settle in Australia, our organisation has expanded to meet their needs and alleviate the challenges they face.

But some things never change. ECSC is still the proud employer of a bilingual and bicultural workforce. And ECSC continues to work with values driven organisations and partners to maintain the quality of service for which we are recognised.



Our Board



Sonia Sofat
CHAIR

Sonia is an Indian woman of colour who combines her passion for community organising, facilitation and anti-racism campaigning to create inclusive educational experiences. Sonia is the Co-Founder and Director of Hue: Colour the Conversation, an anti racism training and consulting organisation. She has over 10 years experience working in the social justice sector and believes in the power of collective organising to create change.



Lindy Cassidy
SECRETARY

Lindy has worked extensively in access and equity areas in education particularly for TAFE TAFE NSW Outreach providing programs for multicultural communities. More recently, she worked as the Curriculum Program Manager at Sydney Institute for Community Languages Education. Lindy brings a passion for community and social justice to the Board and expertise of government policy and processes.



Jacqui Gilligan
TREASURER

Jacqui has over 20 years' experience working across government, corporate, not-for-profit and community projects both in Australia and internationally. She has trained entrepreneurial women in Myanmar and supported numerous rural and remote Indigenous communities to design, develop and run sustainable community-led enterprises. She currently leads the development and operations of social impact ventures at SSI.



Rosanna Barbero
DIRECTOR

Rosanna joined the Board of Directors in 2014. Rosanna has over 20 years' experience working in the global justice movement, based in Asia and the Middle East. Rosanna is currently the Chief Executive Officer of the Addison Road Community Centre Organisation in Marrickville.



Tamkin Hakim
DIRECTOR

Tamkin arrived as a refugee child in the early 1980's from Afghanistan and is passionate about global causes such as human rights, social Justice, poverty and climate change. She is the founder and CEO of Athena Mindset Counselling and Mental Health an organisation which engages, educates and empowers women to access education, employment

and training. Tamkin is committed to advocacy work and has joined the United Nation's Association of Australia NSW Human Right's team, volunteers at the Addison Road Community Organisation. The range of her international endeavours includes the founding of a skills and design school for girls and a home run women's medical clinic in Afghanistan.



Vasili Maroulis
DIRECTOR

Vasili is the CEO at Marrickville Legal Centre (MLC). Vasili has worked with MLC since 2015, previously assisting vulnerable clients as a Generalist and Youth Solicitor. In his capacity as the Managing Principal Solicitor and CEO, Vasili has worked with his management team to digitally transform the MLC's operations to help optimise legal service delivery to improve access to justice for disadvantaged communities in NSW.



Yusra Metwally
DIRECTOR

Yusra is a Solicitor and Senior Policy and Projects Officer at Western Sydney Community Forum. Yusra sits on the Bankstown Hospital Consumer Committee and is the founder of Swim Sisters, a grassroots initiative which aims to improve water safety skills in culturally and linguistically diverse communities in Western Sydney.



Dina Petrakis
DIRECTOR

Dina has worked in Australia and the Asia Pacific region on large scale social justice and capacity building projects. She was Head of Education for NSW Corrective Services and developed the successful and internationally recognized IGNITE refugee enterprise program for Settlement Services International. She is currently the Chief Executive Officer of Ethnic Community Services.



Simon Rosenbaum
DIRECTOR

Simon is Scientia A/Prof at UNSW. His research focuses on physical activity and mental illness for populations exposed to trauma. He has published 250 peer reviewed publications and co-edited a textbook on exercise and mental illness. He is President of the Australian Society for Traumatic Stress Studies and co-chair of the Olympic Refugee Foundation. Simon has delivered workshops in over 25 countries.



Message from the Chairperson

It's with a sense of optimism and gratitude that I share some important updates from the ECSC community.

Firstly, I'm delighted to share that we have returned to full-service delivery after the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the challenges of the past year, our team's resilience and dedication have brought us to this point. We're ready to continue our mission, working towards a society where everyone, regardless of their cultural background, feels truly valued and supported.

During the lockdown, we faced workforce challenges, losing some amazing bilingual-bicultural staff members. Their contributions were invaluable, and we're actively working on strategies to rebuild our team, ensuring we're even better equipped to serve our diverse communities.

In the spirit of growth, ECSC is in the midst of reviewing and making changes to our Constitution. This step is vital to keep us effective and adaptable in the ever-evolving landscape of community services. And in alignment with this, we developed *ECSC's Strategic Plan 2023-2025* and the *Operational Plan* that will action and implement our values.

Excitingly, we also gave our office space a makeover! The redesign aims to create a more collaborative and supportive environment, fostering innovation and excellence in our services. We believe a welcoming space translates to even better support for you, our community.

Advocacy is at the core of our values and in line with this we proudly supported the YES vote, standing hand in hand with the communities we serve. This commitment reflects our dedication to empowering and enhancing the lives of people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds across NSW.

On behalf of the Board of Directors I want to extend a big thank you to the wonderful staff and participants at ECSC. Without you, none of this could have happened.

Finally, I'm excited about the future of ECSC and ensuring our organisation's sustainability for the next 44 years!



Sonia Sofat
Chairperson, ECSC

Sonia Sofat
Chairperson, ECSC



respect

Chief Executive Officer's Report

This is a wonderful opportunity to reflect on the highlights of my first 12 months as CEO at ECSC.

Over the past year we successfully introduced a continuous improvement system which has seen ECSC move towards a paperless office through the integration of IT systems and the boost to connectivity. The focus on IT infrastructure has strengthened our cyber security, an important consideration for every organisation working with private and confidential information.

Within the ECSC program space, we strengthened internal collaboration. This resulted in a series of office re-arrangement days positioning workstations to promote a more collegial working environment.

We introduced *Achievement and Development Plans* to capacity build ECSC's workforce and drive innovation and strategy. ADPs will allow us to monitor and evaluate the strength of our program and service delivery and provide focus for future growth.

Our reputation as a leader in the multicultural space was acknowledged by the National Disability Insurance Agency and we were invited to participate in the development of a national NDIA CALD Strategy in Melbourne. We saw this as an

important opportunity to amplify the voices of our NDIS CALD participants.

The Department of Communities and Justice accepted our abstract for their conference on Multicultural Community Engagement Conference on 27 October 2022 and I presented a paper on authentic engagement.

ECSC was also well represented in the event space. Our MACS team held another *Cultural Bridges* event in July in Randwick. This was attended by over 200 energetic participants from our aged care programs. This event highlighted social connectedness and healthy ageing.

Meanwhile the MDS team were not to be outdone and prepared an equally exciting and well attended *Groovability* event in December which saw more than 100 participants groove to lively beats from a local DJ. ECSC's Wednesday night dance group The Groovies provided the entertainment.

Our events calendar culminated in a *LGBTQA+ Multicultural Carnevale* which took place at Addison Road Community Centre. This event was made possible through funding from Multicultural NSW and a welcome addition to World Pride. The Carnevale brought to life diversity within diversity and attendees reveled in music by DJ Pluto Beat and a diverse range of multicultural performers.



Dina Petrakis
CEO, ECSC

A photograph of three women standing side-by-side, dressed in traditional, ornate clothing. The woman on the left wears a pink and purple lace outfit. The woman in the middle wears a purple and green patterned outfit with a green shawl. The woman on the right wears a purple and blue patterned outfit. They are all smiling slightly. The background is a blurred green and yellow wall.

I would like to thank
ECSC staff who provided their
expertise, skills, support and lots of
cakes to make this incredible year
take shape; and to the management team –
Ellen Gore, Sebastian Behrens, Frances Wade
and Dermot Carberry. And a very big thank
you to the new **Board of Directors** who were
patient and extremely supportive providing
guidance and advice and who could
clearly see the future pathway
for ECSC.



Dina Petrakis

Dina Petrakis
Chief Executive Officer, ECSC

ECSC's Staff

ECSC staff are the backbone of the organisation supporting people from a diverse range of communities and age ranges, ensuring they have equitable access to services and opportunities.

Over the past 12 months we have welcomed new staff members and bid a sad farewell to others.

It was with mixed feelings that we said goodbye to **Abella Sabao**, **Divina Cergol** and **Chris Chai** who were not only employees, but ECSC institutions having worked for the organisation since its inception. Their corporate knowledge and history was unparalleled. On behalf of everyone at ECSC we wish them all the best in their retirement.

We also bid farewell to **Dermot Carberry** and **Lisa Park** from the Multicultural Disability team, and we welcomed new Manager Disability Services, **Pauline Hedman**. Pauline brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the areas of Support Coordination and Community Access and is keen to grow ECSC's fee for service offerings. Watch this space.



We thank and acknowledge everyone at ECSC and acknowledge their contribution to the communities and participants they support and to their patience and good humour in a year of transition.





Our Strategic Goals

VISION

Our vision is that of an Australian society that celebrates and values diversity and equal opportunity and encourages participation and inclusion.

PURPOSE

Continue to advance access and equity to all services and social inclusion within Australian society for people from CALD backgrounds.

AIM 1: Enhance the visibility, presence and voice of the organisation.

AIM 2: Achieve long-term financial sustainability and growth.

AIM 3: Nurture innovation, creativity and best practice.

OUR VALUES

Trust • Respect • Diversity • Social Justice • Empowerment

Strategic Directions and Operational Planning

Development of the *ECSC Strategic Directions* took place during August and September 2022 through *Change Agenda* workshops as a whole of organisation activity. The workshops also included the ECSC management team and five representatives of the Board. Participants were very generous with their ideas throughout the process and the material gathered was highly detailed and contributed to the ECSC Operations Plan.

WORKFORCE ENGAGEMENT

ECSC Strategic Directions for 2023-2025 was published in November 2022. It is clear, concise and achievable, promoting ethnic diversity and inclusion as the foundational concepts at the heart of our organisation.

Throughout the organisation-wide planning consultations, staff voiced their ambitions for the organisation, their professional careers in the sector and their relationships at work.

Having gained staff support through this process, management were then able to focus on the structural changes that will, over time, facilitate and strengthen our reputation for:

- quality service provision, intersectoral partnerships, reliable reporting and financial sustainability, and
- an employee value proposition (EVP) that includes rewarding careers, teamwork, and flexible working conditions.

We continued to engage staff in the proposed changes that followed. ECSC is committed to being a fair and responsible employer of choice.

BRINGING OUR VALUES ALIVE AT ECSC

This values workshop was conducted at an *All Staff Meeting* on 4 October 2022 following feedback to staff on the strategic planning process in which they had recently participated. By identifying the behaviours underpinning each of ECSC's five values, staff now agree on what it means to express *Trust, Respect, Social Justice, Diversity* and *Empowerment* in speech or action in the workplace.

ECSC's Employee Value Proposition

- Build skills and a career at ECSC
- Gain experience with a recognised leader in Sydney's multicultural communities
- Enjoy a culture of safety and wellbeing
- Contribute to ECSC's growing reputation for innovation and achievement

empowerment

ORGANISATION REVIEW

An organisation review was undertaken throughout 2022-23, taking its lead from the **ECSC Strategic Directions 2023-25**. The aim was to realign the organisation's structure with regulatory and contractual obligations, thereby improving service delivery to clients, designing more rewarding jobs for staff, and improving accountability to funders. Activities included a review of:

- Contractual arrangements, including employment contracts
- Awards, job families, position descriptions and capabilities
- Management structure in order to improve workforce capacity
- Work Health & Safety protocols
- Financial, Audit and Risk Management
- Data management and reporting protocols
- Asset management and technology integration

While ensuring consistency with strategic directions as well as budgetary constraints, the review identified gaps and proposed the necessary functions, assets and technology to achieve change. These were incorporated into operational planning.


The Organisation Review is one project within a suite of reforms to be implemented over time that aim to address any potential shortfalls in stakeholder expectations, particularly in relation to the needs of ethnic communities particularly across the Inner West, Central and Eastern Sydney.



ACHIEVEMENT & DEVELOPMENT PLANNING FRAMEWORK

The introduction of **Achievement and Development Planning (ADP)** in 2022/23 delivered on a commitment to provide a developmental approach to staff supervision at every level of the organisation. Referencing operational planning and incorporating self-assessment and personal accountability, the ADP process is based on upfront agreements between the team member and their supervisor. It is the team member's responsibility to deliver on their commitments,

and the supervisor's responsibility is to provide them with opportunities to develop in ways that support their achievement goals. The process is fair, objective and builds the organisation's reputation as a great place to work. Over the next 12 months, a suite of capabilities aligned to position descriptions will be introduced to align with position descriptions and the requirements of relevant Awards.



Following three years of a pandemic and lockdown, rebuilding our organisation **is not an easy task, but it is worthwhile.** We all benefit from looking to the future and building on our skills to deliver new and different services in even better ways. We are proceeding within a realistic timeframe and in line with available resources.

Dina Petrakis, ECSC CEO

Multicultural Aged Care Services

IMPACT

In 2022-2023 Multicultural Aged Care Services (MACS) team worked with seniors, carers and their families from Arabic, Armenian, Bulgarian, Chinese, English, Georgian, Greek, French, Japanese, Kazakh, Italian, Maltese, Malaysian, Moldavian, Spanish, Portuguese, Pacifica, Russian, Vietnamese, Ukrainian, and other communities.

18 597 hours of social support were delivered to MACS participants ensuring that each person was heard and provided with codesigned supports that genuinely enhanced their life with comfort, self-realisation, and contentment.

MACS worked closely with the University of Western Sydney, Torrens University, and TAFE NSW to assist local and international students on placement to excel in implementation skills, ability articulate and apply their knowledge of social work theories and concepts within the practice setting to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate services to ECSC clients.

ACHIEVEMENTS

MACS strive to make certain that every person accessing our services receives culturally and linguistically appropriate individualised services. In order to become a certified service provider in specialised care to diverse groups, ECSC was assessed by the Australian Healthcare Associates and in February 2023 became a verified service provider delivering specialised care to diverse groups. The specialisations are published on *My Aged Care Find a Provider profile*.

**"I have chosen
to be happy
because it is good
for my health."**

Voltaire



WELLNESS GROUPS

“It is a way of living”

We asked our participants **“What does wellness mean to you?”**

They all mentioned several dimensions, including emotional, spiritual, and physical wellbeing. They talked about wellness encompassing a healthy body, a sound mind, and a tranquil spirit.

And that’s exactly what MACS services offer to all our participants:

- gentle exercises, yoga, fall prevention, multicultural Zumba, dancing, singing, and walks on the beach and in the parks to maintain their physical health
- brain training activities, computer classes including help with smartphones, tablets and MACS Facebook and language classes to enhance their memory and help exercise their cognitive skills
- information sessions and webinars about the areas of interest of particular support groups
- social bus outings to different locations across Sydney and wide range of other activities
- and most importantly feel supported by the people who care.

Holistic in nature, these sessions focused on the physical, mental, and social wellbeing of participants, utilising our unique cultural and linguistically appropriate, person-centred approaches to care and support.



respect

MACS INDIVIDUAL SOCIAL SUPPORT SERVICES

MACS individual social support services continued focusing on building our participants' independence to ensure they remain living comfortably and safely in their own homes. MACS team treated our participants as unique individuals with their own strengths, abilities, life experiences, preferences, choices, and needs. MACS team connected them with their local community, friends and loved ones; accompanied them to medical and vaccination appointments, shopping and other activities.

CARE RELATIONSHIP AND CARERS SUPPORT PROGRAM

Flexible Respite and Centre Based Respite services made sure that all our participants were provided with plenty of opportunities to join interactive activities based on their interests. MACS Team promoted wellness, considering dignity of risk and ensuring our participants' aspirations and needs were met. MACS team offered a wide range of fun activities, gentle exercises, dancing, karaoke, participation in Knitting will love groups, and community access.

MULTICULTURAL AGED CARE BROKERAGES

Multicultural Aged Care Brokerages were in high demand. Our support services and activities provided in culturally and linguistically appropriate manners kept our participants physically and mentally healthy, and socially and emotionally engaged.

“FACING AND OVERCOMING CHALLENGES” PROJECT

“Facing and Overcoming Challenges” Project focused on supporting the most vulnerable, at-risk seniors especially those living alone and isolated to overcome Post COVID 19 traumas. In the timeframe of this project ECSC has engaged more than **300 seniors** from **18 CALD communities** and delivered **8 157 hours** of support. The ECSC Bilingual Support team helped build the capacity of participants through the delivery of **70 wellbeing sessions** including building resilience and implementing lifestyle approaches for improving physical and psychological wellbeing.



HIGHLIGHT

18 597 hours
of social support
were delivered to
MACS participants.

CULTURAL BRIDGES

ECSC annual event for culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) older people, *"Cultural Bridges"* celebrated our aged care program participants, community members and highlighted the importance of healthy living and self-care whilst sharing cultural heritage.

More than **200 older Australians** from various CALD backgrounds attended this celebration of cultural diversity and enjoyed an amazing multicultural concert, showcase of cultural heritage and artistic endeavours including drawings, paintings, and art and craft created by the participants and an opportunity for CALD older people to socialise and connect with new and old friends.

The event was attended by **Stephanie di Pasqua**, MP Member for Drummoyne, Vice-Consul of Italy **Ms Caterina Pascali**, Councillor **Bill Burst** and other distinguished guests.

Congratulations ECSC on the *Cultural Bridges* event being mentioned in NSW parliament – you have made parliamentary history through your entry in the Hansard!

The Inner West Multicultural Festival was organised in collaboration with Inner West Council, Community & Cultural Connections Inc and Newtown Neighbourhood Centre and Cyprus community club. More than **150 MACS seniors** from CALD background enjoyed this wonderful event.



diversity

Multicultural Children's Services

Over the past financial year, Multicultural Children's Services (MCS) delivered on its commitment to the wellbeing and lifelong educational achievement of children from multicultural backgrounds. We aim to make equal access and full participation in high quality early learning programs available to children from all cultural, linguistic and socioeconomic backgrounds in our communities.

ECSC's flagship **Multicultural Inclusion Support** program (formerly Bicultural Support) continues to be a key driver in reaching our goals. This program allows early childhood education providers to access a pool of multi-lingual inclusion support workers, who use their language skills and cultural knowledge to foster the inclusion of children and families from multicultural backgrounds, while supporting educators to strengthen culturally responsive practice. Over the past year we were able to deliver inclusion support to a growing cohort of children enrolled in preschools and long-day care centres across NSW thanks to generous funding from the NSW Department of Education and the Commonwealth government's Inclusion Support Program.

In 22/23, MCS' dedicated team doubled down on its efforts to boost sector capacity for cultural inclusion through innovation and new initiatives. This included the design and publication of our innovative **Visual Card** resource, which was generously supported through funding from the **Foundation of Graduates in Early Childhood Studies**. Covering key early learning activities accompanied by visuals and translations in 15 community languages, including Arabic, Assyrian, Brazilian, Dari, Hindi, Karen, Korean, Nepali, Malayalam, Mandarin, Portuguese, Russian, Tamil, Ukrainian and Urdu. The resource enables educators to include children with budding English language skills and an additional home language.



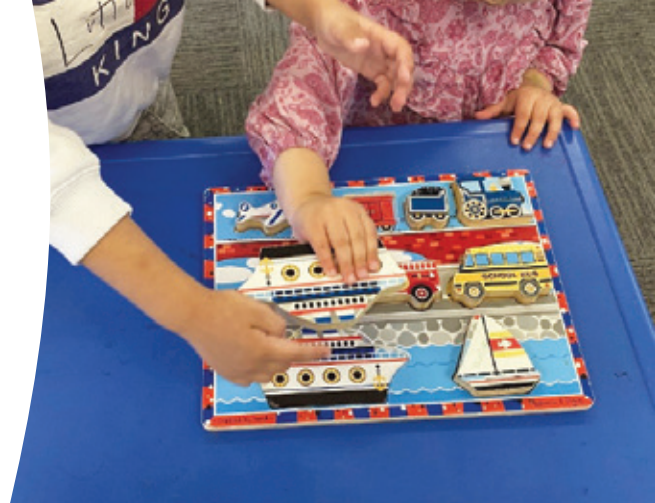
VISUAL CARDS

- Translated into 15 languages
- Pronunciation aid for English speakers
- 15 preschool activities
- QR code to play native speaker recording

In future, educators right across NSW and Australia will be able to access the Visual Cards through ECSC's forthcoming online resource hub. The **Multicultural Early Childhood Resource Hub** has been developed with funding by the NSW Department of Education over the course of FY22/23 and is scheduled to go live in the upcoming financial year. Once live, educators will be able to access a host of resources to boost culturally responsive pedagogy including digital recording of songs and stories in community languages, activity plans on culturally responsive learning activities as well as professional development opportunities. The hub will also host a series of online Professional Development Webinars build capacity of Early Childhood Educators in culturally inclusive practice.

Through the professional development webinar series, early childhood educators will develop evidence-based strategies to support the inclusion of children and families from multicultural backgrounds, including those from migrant, refugee, and asylum-seeker backgrounds. We would like to extend our gratitude to *STARTTS* and *Plumtree Children's Services*, who kindly contributed their time, expertise and enthusiasm towards developing the webinar content.

In addition to our sector capacity-building achievements, the MCS team continued its legacy of success in supporting multicultural families to access early years learning programs through *IDEAS Pathway Playgroup Program*. The program, which is funded by the NSW Department of Education, aims to familiarise participating families with the benefits of play-based learning and the Australian early years education system through playgroups and parent workshops held in community languages. Our dedicated team further provides support to families wishing to enrol their child in an early years learning program, such as identifying suitable preschools, filling application forms and accessing childcare subsidies. In FY22/23 we focused our support on newly arrived communities from Dari, Hazaragi and Arabic-speaking backgrounds in the Southwest Sydney area.



Play-based learning can be a novel concept for many of our newest community members. By providing access to play-based learning opportunities through our playgroups program, ECSC aims to ensure all children receive a solid foundation for lifelong learning and wellbeing.

Our team of outstanding educators supports parents to understand the benefits of play-based learning and to make informed choices about their children's educational needs.



trust



Parent workshops support families from newly arrived and established communities to navigate the complex early childhood learning sector in NSW.

We are proud of all we have achieved this year but also know that much remains to be done to make culturally inclusive early learning opportunities available for all children in our community. As a small program we know we cannot singlehandedly effect change across the early learning sector. However, we are confident that our contributions can have reach and lasting impacts through the strong partnerships we have built with our allies and partners in the government, private and community sectors. We look to the future with enthusiasm and are excited to see the launch of our Multicultural Early Childhood Resource Hub and webinars in FY23/24.

MCS IN NUMBERS

Multicultural Inclusion Support

Community preschools can access Multicultural Inclusion Support through the *Preschool Multicultural Support Program*, generously funded by the NSW Department of Education. In FY22/23 we provided inclusion support to **43** children enrolled in **33** community preschools across NSW. Children and families supported came from a wide range of cultural in linguistic backgrounds, representing the richness and diversity represented in our community.

Providers of long day care, family day care, vacation care and out of school hours care can access Multicultural Inclusion Support through the Commonwealth-funded Inclusion Support Program. In FY22/23 we provided Multicultural Inclusion Support to **4** Long Day Care Centres in the Sydney Metropolitan region. This included **2** children from Mandarin-speaking background, **1** child from a Japanese-speaking background and **1** child from a Spanish-speaking background.

IDEA Pathway Playgroups Program



- We held **6** playgroups
- **51** children attended
- **16** children now attend early learning services
- **19** children are enrolled and waiting to start





OUR TEAM

MCS' achievements would not have been possible without the knowledge, expertise, creativity and dedication of our valued team members **Nadia Faour** (Playgroups), **Yasamin Osmani** (Playgroups), **Efrosini Costa** (Preschools) and **Kylie Ashley** (Preschools). This year the team punched above its weight and achieved outstanding outcomes for the families and communities with whom we work.

In FY22/23 MCS said farewell to our longest-standing team member **Divina Cergol**, who retired in May 2023. Divina was our trusted administrator who provided invaluable support to all of MCS' programs throughout her many years of service at ECSC. Divina will be dearly missed!

diversity

trust • empowerment



"The MIW (multicultural inclusion worker) was helpful and attentive to the child that she was supporting. She settled the child well and helped us build a strong relationship with the child."

Multicultural Disability Services

The past financial year has seen changes within the Multicultural Disability Services (MDS) team as we farewelled **Dermot Carberry** and **Lisa Park**. The MDS team on behalf of ECSC takes this opportunity to thank them both for their contribution to service delivery and advocacy for people with disability and wish them well in their future endeavours.

The MDS team welcomed new Manager **Pauline Hedman** in mid-May. Pauline has extensive experience supporting people with disability and is capacity building and expanding Support Coordination and Community Access service delivery. Over the past financial year, MDS saw an increase in service participants across both Support Coordination and Community Access. This growth reflects the increasing need for quality service delivery for people in the community living with disability. As a result, there has been an increase in fee for service income generated through referrals particularly via word of mouth and general enquires.

NDIS SUPPORT COORDINATION

The MDS Support Coordination team is committed to the growth and sustainability of the program. The experienced and dedicated team continued to support clients with complex needs by connecting them to relevant services and supporting them to meet their individual goals. Support Coordination provided support to more than **95 participants**, and it is a testament to the skills and experience of the team that they retained their clientele following their Plan Review process. Clients are supported in accessing relevant government and other services according to their needs. The Support Coordinators have ensured that their clients receive the appropriate level of funding to enable them to achieve as much independence as possible. We are working on the expansion of MDS in 2023-2024 with the recruitment of additional Support Coordinators and Support Workers.





INSPIRATIONAL STORIES OF CHANGE

Supporting participants in remote and rural locations outside NSW

Participant A and his wife live on a large family farm with lots of tropical fruit trees half an hour from a city located outside NSW. The participant was a mechanic until he suffered a stroke in late 2021. His wife is now his full-time carer. With support from the hospital treating team he accessed the NDIS. ECSC received a referral for a Vietnamese speaking Support Coordinator due to the lack of such speakers in this area of Australia. Support provisions for remote access were put in place by ECSC including phone, text, email, phone conferences and video team meetings with the participant and his treatment team at the hospital. The Support Coordinator facilitated connections to NDIS services and supports including Centrelink DSP payment, carers payments, taxi subsidy scheme, guardianship while ensuring that the client understood the information being provided and was part of the decision-making process. Participant A was able to access AT equipment prior to being discharged from hospital and is now settling at home. And despite the availability of local providers, the participant and his family have chosen to continue to receive their Support Coordination Services remotely through ECSC. Recently the ECSC Support Coordinator was involved in the recent review of this participant's NDIS package which received a substantial increase in funding compared to his previous plan.

"I have a fantastic support coordinator in NSW. Thanks to her support and dedication my husband can live his best life".

trust

INSPIRATIONAL STORIES OF CHANGE *CONT.*

Supporting participants transition out of hospital

Participant B had been in hospital for several months due to the lack of suitable accommodation before being referred to ECSC for Support Coordination Services. The Support Coordinator met with the Portuguese speaking participant to discuss the implementation of his NDIS plan and service options. The Support Coordinator connected him with a Portuguese-speaking support worker who visited him 3-4 times a week in the hospital to build trust. The Support Coordinator assisted him to obtain his Disability Support Pension (DSP). Once he received his DSP approval the hospital was able to discharge the participant to a group home near the city. He is receiving regular physiotherapy, has Portuguese-speaking support workers visiting him at his group home and is taking swimming and karate lessons with his support worker. He is making good progress in his recovery and is very satisfied with the support services he is receiving.

Supporting participants access the correct level of support for their needs

Participant C was referred to ECSC for Support Coordination services by a physiotherapist. He was experiencing multiple challenges due to the limited funding in his NDIS package. After careful discussion with Participant the Support Coordinator connected him to new service providers who provided the participant with a comprehensive functional capacity assessment. The Support Coordinator then organised a series of review meetings with the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) to discuss the funding for this participant's plan. The outcome of these meetings, which was evidenced by the functional capacity assessment, resulted in a substantial increase to the participants plan to ensure his current needs are being met.

"Thank you to my support coordinator, I am very happy with all the supports I am receiving".



"I will never leave my current support coordinator".

empowerment • trust

NDIS COMMUNITY ACCESS AND INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT

ECSC currently provides **Community Participation** support services to participants from CALD backgrounds either as an individual service or as a group social activity. Community Access services continued to deliver support to more than **30** participants from various cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Programs that were delivered during 2022-2023 included:

- Dance group
- Disability Social Participation
- Daily living
- Capacity building
- Group and one on one social support

COMMUNITIES COMING TOGETHER

The **Communities Coming Together (CCT)** program continues to support new and emerging communities including parents and carers of people living with a disability. The program is currently working with and engaging the Nepalese and Tibetan community and Vietnamese Carers. Activities which took place in 2022-2023 included: education and awareness raising sessions on health and social connection, the importance of self-care and regular health checks. CCT is successfully working in partnership with the *Vaccination Champions* program. CCT was also active in the successful *GroovAbility* event which took place in December 2022 and which saw more than **100** participants attend the event.

VOLUNTEER AND GROW

The **Volunteer and Grow (V&G)** program provided opportunities for people with disability who were seeking opportunities to connect with community via volunteering, training, information sessions and capacity building.

During 2022-23 **twenty** V&G participants took part in activities which included the maintenance of the Addison Road Community Centre's rain garden, working with City of Sydney's City Park, volunteering with Hampers of Hope to provide Christmas goodies for people in need, providing information sessions on human and disability rights and taking part in health awareness training.

HIGHLIGHTS

Our Social Support group went on two excursions: to Palm Beach in December 2022 and Wollongong in May 2023.

ECSC's bicultural support workers ensured that participants' needs were met and active inclusion in the community took place.

Dance Group performed at the Groovability in Burwood RSL and Sydney Family Show in Moore Park.

Our Performance for the Year 2022-2023

In 2022-2023, Ethnic Community Services Co-operative (ECSC) delivered various services to children, people with disabilities and their carers and aged people from Culturally And Linguistically Diverse backgrounds through its various programs. We are committed to advance access and equity and social inclusion for all Australians.

ECSC managed to achieve our overall goals successfully and this has been possible due to an excellent team effort and staff members' ongoing commitment to inclusion and social justice.

RESULTS

The net surplus (deficit) from operations is (\$255,059). ECSC is a non-profit organisation and no income tax is applicable.

DIVIDENDS

No amount has been paid or declared by way of a dividend during the year.

SERVICE DELIVERY

All our programs' participants continued to have services provided successfully with innovation and commitment. We complied with all restrictions put in place by various government departments and developed, updated policies and procedures accordingly.

ECSC will continue to operate and pursue its goals with the changes that may occur in the

coming year due to uncertainty of the virus and other policy reforms.

DIRECTORS' BENEFITS

No director since the beginning of the year has received or become entitled to receive a benefit by reason of a contract made by ECSC, or with a related corporation or with a firm of which the director is member, or in which the Director has a substantial financial interest other than a fixed salary as a full-time employee of ECSC.

Made and signed in accordance with a resolution of the directors.

Sydney, 21 November 2023

Chief Executive Officer: Dina Petrakis

Signature:



Director (Treasurer): Jacqui Gilligan

Signature:



Directors' Report for the Year Ended 30 June 2023

The directors present their report on Ethnic Community Services Co-operative Limited for the financial year ended 30 June 2023.

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

Directors

The names of the directors in office at any time during, or since the end of, the year are:

Dina Petrakis, Director

Meetings attended 5/5

Jacqui Gilligan, Treasurer

Appointed 30/11/2022, meetings attended 2/3

Rosanna Barbero, Director

Meetings attended 5/5

Simon Rosenbaum, Director

Appointed 30/11/2022, meetings attended 3/3

Sonia Sofat, Chairperson

Appointed 30/11/2022, meetings attended 2/3

Vanessa Gauci, Director

Appointed 14/09/2023

Vasili Maroulis, Director

Meetings attended 3/5

Yusra Metwally, Director

Meetings attended 3/5

Lindy Cassidy, Director

Appointed 30/11/2022, meetings attended 3/3

Jane Brock, Ex Chairperson

Resigned 30/11/2022, meetings attended 2/2

Samantha Damoulakis, Director

Resigned 08/11/2022, meetings attended 1/2

Tamkin Hakim, Director

Appointed 30/11/2022, resigned 05/06/2023

Meetings attended 4/5

Vivi Germanos-Koutsounadis, Director

Resigned 30/11/2022, meetings attended 2/2

Manal Zahra, Director

Resigned 30/11/2022, meetings attended 3/3

Shikha Chowdhary, Director

Resigned 08/06/2022

Directors have been in office since the start of the financial year to the date of this report unless otherwise stated.

Principal Activities

The principal activity of Ethnic Community Services Co-operative Limited during the financial year was to provide services to the most vulnerable and disadvantaged people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, including people with disabilities and their carers, children and their families from refugee and migrant backgrounds and frail aged people and their carers. The services are provided through various programs that meet their individual needs.

No significant changes in the nature of the Co-operative's activity occurred during the financial year.

Operating Results

The surplus of the Co-operative after providing for income tax amounted to \$255,059 [2022 deficit: \$(117,240)].

2. OTHER ITEMS

Significant Changes in State of Affairs

There have been no significant changes in the state of affairs of the Co-operative during the year.

Events After the Reporting Date

No matters or circumstances have arisen since the end of the financial year which significantly affected or may significantly affect the operations of the Co-operative, the results of those operations or the state of affairs of the Co-operative in future financial years.

Future Developments and Results

Likely developments in the operations of the Co-operative and the expected results of those operations in future financial years have not been included in this report as the inclusion of such information is likely to result in unreasonable prejudice to the Co-operative.

Meetings of Directors

During the financial year, 5 meetings of directors (including committees of directors) were held.

Indemnification and Insurance of Officers and Auditors

No indemnities have been given or insurance premiums paid, during or since the end of the financial year, for any person who is or has been an officer or auditor of Ethnic Community Services Co-operative Limited.

Proceedings on Behalf of Company

No person has applied for leave of court under the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* to bring proceedings on behalf of the Co-operative or intervene in any proceedings to which the Co-operative is a party for the purpose of taking responsibility on behalf of the Co-operative for all or any part of those proceedings.

Auditor's Independence Declaration

The lead auditor's independence declaration in accordance with section 60-40 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*, for the year ended 30 June 2023 has been received.

Signed in accordance with a resolution of the Board of Directors:

Chief Executive Officer: Dina Petrakis

Signature:



Director (Treasurer): Jacqui Gilligan

Signature:



Dated this 21st day of November 2023

Statement of Profit and Loss and Other Comprehensive Income for the Year Ended 30 June 2023

	2023 \$	2022 \$
Revenue	3,262,362	2,707,883
Finance income	16,455	866
Other income	115,461	185,319
Employee benefits expense	(2,539,634)	(2,573,983)
Depreciation and amortisation expense	(47,138)	(35,478)
Other expenses	(536,111)	(401,847)
Finance expenses	(16,336)	-
Surplus/(Deficit) before income tax	255,059	(117,240)
Income tax expense	-	-
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year	255,059	(117,240)
Other comprehensive income for the year, net of tax	-	-
Total comprehensive surplus/(deficit) for the year	255,059	(117,240)

Statement of Financial Position as at 30 June 2023

	2023 \$	2022 \$
ASSETS		
Current Assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	2,848,051	2,661,604
Trade and other receivables	165,609	81,606
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	3,013,660	2,743,210
Non-Current Assets		
Investments Co-operative Society	10	10
Property, plant and equipment	415,055	430,629
Right-of-use assets	356,491	-
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS	771,556	430,639
TOTAL ASSETS	3,785,216	3,173,849
LIABILITIES		
Current Liabilities		
Trade and other payables	324,514	236,701
Lease liabilities	13,803	-
Employee benefits	247,261	511,999
Other financial liabilities	694,966	548,464
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	1,280,544	1,297,164
Non-Current Liabilities		
Lease liabilities	293,763	-
Employee benefits	32,671	-
TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES	326,434	-
TOTAL LIABILITIES	1,606,978	1,297,164
NET ASSETS	2,178,238	1,876,685
EQUITY		
Retained surplus	2,178,238	1,876,685
TOTAL EQUITY	2,178,238	1,876,685

Statement of Changes in Equity for the Year Ended 30 June 2023

2023		
	RETAINED SURPLUS \$	TOTAL \$
Balance at 1 July 2022	1,876,685	1,876,685
Restatement due to adoption of AASB 16	46,494	46,494
Surplus attributable to members	255,059	255,059
Balance at 30 June 2023	2,178,238	2,178,238

2022		
	RETAINED SURPLUS \$	TOTAL \$
Balance at 1 July 2021	1,993,925	1,993,925
Deficit attributable to members	(117,240)	(117,240)
Balance at 30 June 2022	1,876,685	1,876,685



Statement of Cash Flows for the Year Ended 30 June 2023

	2023 \$	2022 \$
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES:		
Receipts from grants and other receipts	3,440,323	3,023,490
Payments to suppliers and employees	(3,250,455)	(3,054,519)
Interest received	16,455	866
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities	206,323	(30,163)
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES:		
Purchase of property, plant and equipment	(19,876)	(2,932)
Net cash used in investing activities	(19,876)	(2,932)
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents held	186,447	(33,095)
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year	2,661,604	2,694,699
Cash and cash equivalents at end of year	2,848,051	2,661,604



Directors' Declaration

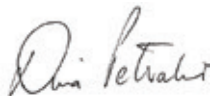
The directors of the Co-operative declare that:

1. The financial statements and notes are in accordance with the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* and:
 - (b) comply with Australian Accounting Standards - Simplified Disclosures; and
 - (b) give a true and fair view of the financial position as at 30 June 2023 and of the performance for the year ended on that date of the Co-operative.
2. In the directors' opinion, there are reasonable grounds to believe that the Co-operative will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable.

This declaration is made in accordance with a resolution of the Board of Directors.

Director (Chief Executive Officer): Dina Petrakis

Signature:



Director (Treasurer): Jacqui Gilligan

Signature:



Dated this 21st day of November 2023



respect

Independent Audit Report to the Members of Ethnic Community Services Co-operative Limited

REPORT ON THE AUDIT OF THE FINANCIAL REPORT

Opinion

We have audited the financial report of Ethnic Community Services Co-operative Limited, which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2023, the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income, the statement of changes in equity and the statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies, and the Directors' declaration.

In our opinion the financial report of Ethnic Community Services Co-operative Limited has been prepared in accordance with Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*, including:

- (i) giving a true and fair view of Co-operative's financial position as at 30 June 2023 and of its financial performance for the year ended; and
- (ii) complying with Australian Accounting Standards - Simplified Disclosures and Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2013*.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report* section of our report. We are independent of Co-operative in accordance with the auditor independence requirements of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* (ACNC Act) and the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 *Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (including Independence Standards)* (the Code) that are relevant to our audit of the financial report in Australia. We have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Responsibilities of Responsible Entities for the Financial Report

The responsible persons of Co-operative are responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards – Simplified Disclosures and the ACNC Act, and for such internal control as the responsible entities determine is necessary to

Independent Audit Report to the Members of Ethnic Community Services Co-operative Limited *cont.*

enable the preparation of the financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, the responsible persons are responsible for assessing Co-operative's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the responsible entities either intends to liquidate Co-operative or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing Co-operative's financial reporting process.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of the financial report.

As part of an audit in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards, we exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of Co-operative's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the directors.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the directors' use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit

Independent Audit Report to the Members of Ethnic Community Services Co-operative Limited *cont.*

evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on Co-operative's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause Co-operative to cease to continue as a going concern.

- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with the director regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

From the matters communicated with the directors, we determine those matters that were of most significance in the audit of the financial report of the current period and are therefore the key audit matters. We describe these matters in our auditor's report unless law or regulation precludes public disclosure about the matter or when, in extremely rare circumstances, we determine that a matter should not be communicated in our report because the adverse consequences of doing so would reasonably be expected to outweigh the public interest benefits of such communication.

DFK Laurence Varnay Auditors Pty Ltd



Faizal Ajmat
Director

Sydney

21 November 2023





**Ethnic Community
Services Co-operative**
A voice for diversity and inclusion

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