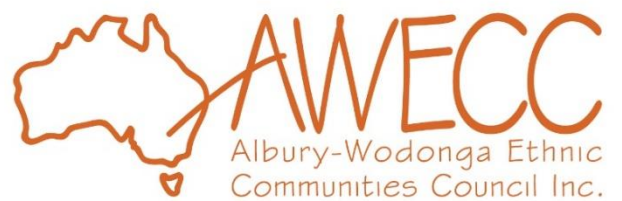




## Albury-Wodonga Ethnic Communities Council Annual Report 2015 - 2016





### **Acknowledgment of Country**

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

### **Albury-Wodonga Ethnic Communities Council Inc.**

Gateway Health, Room F10

155 High Street, Wodonga Victoria 3690

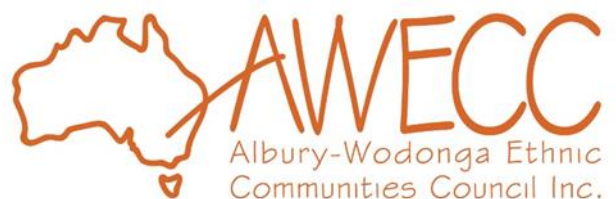
PO Box 920, Wodonga Victoria 3689

Telephone: 0260 246 895 | Email: [contact@awecc.org.au](mailto:contact@awecc.org.au)



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## Welcome

It is our great pleasure to present to you the Albury-Wodonga Ethnic Communities Council Inc. 2015-2016 Financial Year Annual Report.

Since its establishment in late 2014, AWECC has been focused on building strong foundations for the future and positioning ourselves as the peak representative body for multicultural communities on the Border. As a member-driven, community-focused organisation, our success relies largely on the willing and voluntary contribution of our members, volunteers, and partner organisations. We thank each of them for their support in 2015-2016.

We hope you find this report useful in reflecting on the past year as well as providing an insight into our future direction.



## Chairperson's Report

It is my great pleasure to introduce to you AWECC's Annual Report for 2016.

It has been an honour and privilege to have served AWECC in this role for the last two years. I have been incredibly lucky to have been supported by our Board of Management, and our team of wonderful staff and volunteers. As I reflect on our work over the past 2 years, AWECC has evolved as a legitimate voice of the ethnic communities on the Border. We have adopted our strategic plan 2015-17, found our own office space at Gateway Health, developed staffing capacities, established new strategic partnerships, and developed and delivered a number of successful programs.

As expected, the past year also brought before us many challenges, along with some prospects. Despite those challenges, I am extremely proud of the progress AWECC was able to achieve in advancing its mission to advocate, to celebrate and to engage; advocating for the needs of our ethnic communities, celebrating our diverse cultures, and continuing its efforts to foster meaningful engagement with our stakeholders. In 2016, AWECC has continued to grow, to increase its profile, and importantly, taken giant strides towards becoming the voice of ethnic communities on the Border.

Like every other year, 2016 was an eventful year for us. Some of the highlights of this year included, projects such as Senior's LINK, Sharing the Learnings, and Walk Together Albury Wodonga, among others. This year also provided opportunities for us to collaborate with several community organisations to host very successful events such as Cultural Diversity Week and Harmony Day in March, and Refugee Week in June at The Cube Wodonga.

This year's Refugee Week Family Fun Day featured music, food, dancing, information stalls and activities, such as a photo booth, jumping castle, face painting, and more. Another important aspect of this year's Refugee Week celebration, was the signing and declaration of the City of Wodonga as a Refugee Welcome Zone by the Mayor, Cr. Anna Speedie. Given Albury City made the same declaration in 2015, we are proud to now have both the cities of Albury and Wodonga demonstrate their commitment to welcome refugees into the community and uphold their human rights, while demonstrating compassion and enhancing cultural and religious diversity in the community.



## Chairperson's Report continued...

AWECC's Seniors LINK program was a very successful project dedicated to the senior members of migrant and refugee communities on the border. This year, the program collaborated with several organisations, including the Aboriginal arts group 'Blue Healers' and Gateway Health. This project facilitated social interactions and cultural exchange between Australia's First People, senior Australian's, and senior members of old and new migrant communities, through their involvement in an art project. This project played an important role in fostering connections and bridging service gaps for migrant and refugee seniors on the border.

Another of the significant achievements this year was hosting the inaugural Walk Together Albury Wodonga events in October 2016, in conjunction with a number of community partners. This event paved a way to spread the message of welcome and to show appreciation for the work of the Albury-Wodonga community as a welcoming place, by way of walking together, sharing stories and music, and featuring guest speakers. This event was a testimony of a successful project undertaken through collaboration and partnership between local community organisations.



In 2016, we devoted a lot of resources towards staff and Board director development. In this effort, we organised governance trainings and provided professional development opportunities and we will continue to work towards increasing our staff and volunteer capacity into the next year. We also made concerted effort to source funding and apply for grants, and we continue to firm up our policies and process.

I want to acknowledge the consistent support of the Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria (ECCV), both Albury City and City of Wodonga, and the wider local community over the years to ensure AWECC establishes itself as a strong voice for the ethnic communities on the Border. We also want to thank the Victorian Government and the City of Wodonga for their support in establishing AWECC by allocating core funding through the Peak Multicultural Organisations Grants Program over the past two years, and facilitating project management support and resource provision ever since the "AWECC project" was conceived. We are excited by a recent development that the Victorian Government has committed further funding of \$230,000 per year over the next 4 years, to support a strategic partnership between AWECC and the North East Multicultural Association (NEMA). The project, Ovens & Murray Multicultural Regional Area Partnership (OMMRAP) grant, will strengthen AWECC's partnerships with NEMA, Gateway Health and ethnic populations in the Ovens and Murray region.

I want to acknowledge our small team of staff and volunteers for their hard work and dedication over the past year. I acknowledge the work of AWECC Project Coordinator, Brett Sanderson, and the passion and dedication brought into his role, to see AWECC grow and thrive over the years. I also appreciate the work of Lucie Wallis, our newest staff member who oversees AWECC's administration and community liaison functions.

Finally, we are excited to announce that we are on track to employ additional staff into the new year. I also want to thank the members of our Board for their support and leadership in the past year. Their dedication and diligence to their roles as directors has set the organisation up for an exciting year ahead. We have exciting projects rolling out for the coming year; some of these initiatives include, a youth leadership program and advisory group, small community grants, community consultations and forums, a community choir, volunteering and employment pathways, welcome café and a number of community capacity building projects and partnerships.

## Chairperson's Report continued...

As chairperson, I can confidently say that AWECC is at a much stronger position today than the previous years. I look forward to 2017 with great anticipation, as I know it will be another year of growth and consolidation for AWECC. There is of course still a long way to go, but I believe if we are committed and determined enough, and work together in a spirit of unity, we can achieve great things for our members of ethnic communities on the Border. In the meantime, I commend this report to you.

**Teju Chouhan**  
Chairperson





## Our Mission, Vision and Strategy

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

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

Our Vision: Advocate, Celebrate & Engage.



AWECC has a vision for an Albury-Wodonga that provides equitable access and opportunities for all, including ethnic and migrant populations. We dream of a place where these communities operate and flourish and collaborate with each another in a spirit of unity and harmony.

AWECC's Strategic Plan 2015-17 has for key objectives; they are to:  
Promote solidarity and self-sufficiency amongst local ethnic communities;  
Develop a migrant employment program;  
Provide central resources and information provision for ethnic communities; and  
Advocate on the affairs and interests of local ethnic communities.

To read more about our strategy, visit [www.awecc.org.au](http://www.awecc.org.au)

## Highlights and Achievements of 2015-16

We are proud to present some of our highlights during the past year:

- Launch of *Seniors LINK* program in February 2016, with over 20 CALD senior participants;
- AWECC lead organisation for the Albury Wodonga Refugee Week celebrations;
- Partner organisation for Harmony Day event in Albury;
- Partner organisation for Gateway Health's 'Cultures @ The Cube' Wodonga event in March;
- Held an information stall at the Wodonga Volunteer Fair on May 14, 2016;
- AWECC leads a successful Walk Together Albury-Wodonga event on 22 October, 2016 attended by over 200 people, including Federal MP, the Hon. Cathy McGowan;
- AWECC hosts Victorian Multicultural Commission's (VMC) Hume Regional Advisory Council (RAC) headed by Commissioner, Dr Mimmie Claudine Watts in Wodonga on June 15, 2016;
- "The Friendship Quilt" (below) presented to Gateway Health on May 20, 2016, made by participants of the Blue Healers group and AWECC's Seniors LINK program;



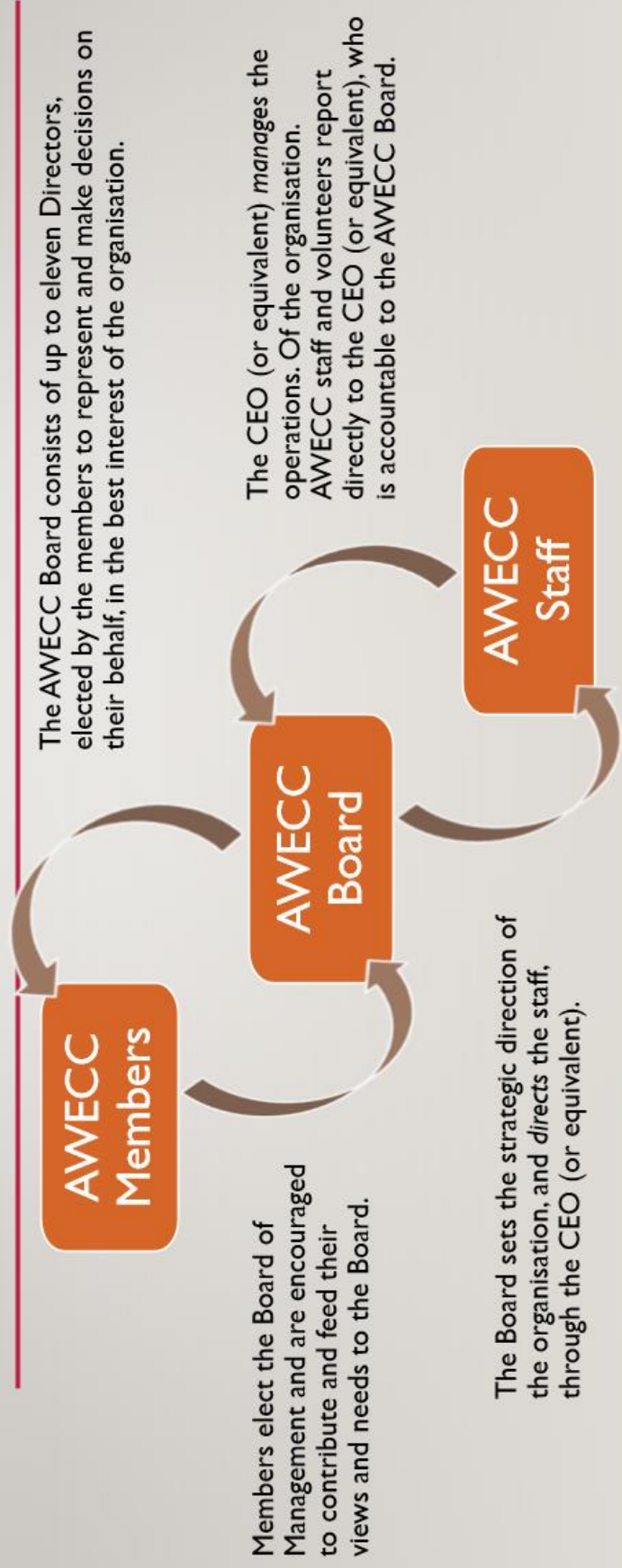
- Seniors lunch at the Australian Croatian Club in Wodonga on May 13, 2016;
- Supported a Global Refugee Youth Consultation in Lavington on April 29, 2016
- Seniors tour at Bonegilla Migrant Experience Centre on April 22, 2016
- Hosted movie screening fundraiser of “The Hundred-Foot Journey” on April 8
- Supported Harmony Day and Holi Festival in Albury on March 20, 2016
- Hosted movie screening fundraiser of “The Second Best Marigold Hotel” on March 19, 2016
- AWECC hosts the first ever ‘Harmony Cup’ Soccer match in Wodonga on March 13, 2016
- Cultures on display in High Street Wodonga in March, with cultural items from Indigenous, Croatian, African, Bhutanese and Indian communities;
- An AWECC team participates in the City 2 City fundraising ‘fun run’ on February 21, 2016;
- AWECC Chair and Deputy Chair represent AWECC at the FECCA National Conference 2015 in Sydney.
- AWECC Deputy Chair represents AWECC at the National Multicultural Women’s Conference in Sydney in November 2016.





# OUR STRUCTURE

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## Board of Management

### 2016

Chairperson  
Deputy Chair  
Treasurer  
Secretary  
Directors

Teju Chouhan  
Mayssa Powell  
Sachin Sachdeva  
Sue Portors  
Harka Bista  
Nyombe Nyambura  
Padma Ayyagari  
Michael Reid  
Aung Syn  
Stephanie Cecile  
Emery Mutela

### 2015

Chairperson  
Deputy Chair  
Treasurer  
Secretary  
Directors

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



< *Some of our wonderful AWECC representatives at the Wodonga Volunteer Fair 2016.*

## What we do

AWECC's priority focus areas in 2015-16 were to find our place in the community by engaging more actively with our members and ethnic community groups. We have been keenly aware of the need and opportunities that working with other organisations and community groups provide, therefore identifying opportunities for collaboration and partnership has been a central focus. AWECC has also been actively targeting suitable funding sources to enable us to better resource our operational requirements, as well as advocate and support our members into future years.

We see advocacy as our core business. Central to advocacy is the need to understand the needs and views of our members, something we have had wonderful opportunities to do this past year; but we must get better at this. We believe that advocacy requires an understanding of broader social and economic issues and the structural barriers to social cohesion and participation. In order to provide a united and coherent voice for ethnic communities, we must develop and maintain meaningful and regular consultation with ethnic community groups, as well as with decision-makers within local governments and other agencies. Active community consultation and collaboration will no doubt continue to be a key priority for AWECC going forward. While we know that more needs to be done in this area, we are proud of the time and effort that our staff, volunteers and Board Directors have given in administration, advocacy and representation.

This work cannot be achieved without the support and input of our members and community. We always welcome new individual and community group members to be part of our success.





## Communications and Publicity

### Website

AWECC's website ([www.awecc.org.au](http://www.awecc.org.au)), was launched in December 2015. The website provides useful links to resources, contact information, and publications.

### Social Media

AWECC has been actively engaging with the community through its Facebook page, and recently launched a Twitter and YouTube pages.

### Newsletter

AWECC engaged with the wider community and members through its quarterly newsletter and Members Monthly. The operations team plans to activate these communication tools even more actively in the coming year.

### Community Forums and meetings

AWECC hosts and attends meetings with community partners and residents throughout the year, including with local government. AWECC plans to hold even more regular community forums next year, as a way to hear and voice the needs needs of local migrants and ethnic groups, and to develop strategies to address these needs.

### Public events

AWECC hosted and participated in several public events throughout 2015-2016, and is committed to celebrating our ethnic cultural diversity and engaging with the broader Albury-Wodonga community.

**find us:**

 [awecc.org.au](http://awecc.org.au)

 [facebook.com/alburywodongaecc](https://facebook.com/alburywodongaecc)

 [twitter.com/AweccConnect](https://twitter.com/AweccConnect)

## Audited Financial Report 2015-16

Report prepared by Sachin Sachdeva (Treasurer)

Audited report provided by R J Sanderson & Associates Pty Ltd on 21<sup>st</sup> Sept, 2016

### Statement of Income & Expenditure

For the year ended 30th June 2016

	2016	2015
<b>Income</b>		
Fundraising	447.80	387.35
Grant - Wodonga Council (OMAC)	43,831.00	0.00
Grant - Wodonga Council (CIG)	5,500.00	0.00
Grant - Dept of Health (Seniors Link)	5,000.00	5,000.00
Grant - Albury Council (Community)	1,000.00	0.00
Grant - Border Trust	3,500.00	0.00
Interest	116.14	3.90
Memberships	340.00	320.00
Reimbursements	556.48	0.00
	<u>60,291.42</u>	<u>5,711.25</u>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Cultural Diversity Week	438.25	0.00
Internet	17.70	0.00
Meeting Expenses	44.70	0.00
Office Supplies	10.65	0.00
Printing & Stationary	94.51	0.00
Seniors Link	4,204.75	0.00
Sharing the Learning	126.00	0.00
Telephone	288.31	0.00
	<u>5,224.87</u>	<u>0.00</u>
<b>Net Revenue</b>	<u>55,066.55</u>	<u>5,711.25</u>

# Statement of Assets & Liabilities

For the year ended 30th June 2016

	2016	2015
<b>Assets</b>		
Cash at Bank	62,882.51	5,711.25
Cash on Hand	87.70	0.00
	<u>62,970.21</u>	<u>5,711.25</u>
<b>Liabilities</b>		
Creditors	<u>2,192.41</u>	0.00
	<u>2,192.41</u>	<u>0.00</u>
<b>Net Assets</b>	60,777.80	5,711.25
<b>Retained Earnings</b>		
Opening Balance	5,711.25	0.00
Net Revenue	55,066.55	5,711.25
Closing Balance	60,777.80	5,711.25

# OUR HISTORY

**2012** | Steering committee established and guided by the Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria and both local council's, to investigate the feasibility of an ethnic community council.

**2012** | Wodonga Council secures funding from Victorian Government and delivers *Leading the Way* leadership and governance training programs to upskill local ethnic community leaders.

**2013** | Wodonga Council is successful in securing funding from the Victorian Government for a project to establish a local ethnic communities council.

**2014** | Albury-Wodonga Ethnic Communities Council Inc. is established and incorporated, and the first Board of Management is elected.



< AWECC's first Board of Management, as elected in December 2014.



Above: Some of the AWECC Board on October 22, 2016.  
From left: Harka Bista. Padma Ayyagari, Sue Portors, Mayssa Powell, Teju Chouhan, Michael Reid, Brett Sanderson (staff), with the Hon. Cathy McGowan MP (second from left).  
Missing: Nyombe Nyambura and Sachin Sachdeva. >

