



Albury-Wodonga Ethnic Communities Council Inc.
Annual Report 2016-17

Acknowledgment of Country

Albury-Wodonga Ethnic Communities Council (AWECC) acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the traditional custodians of the land where we live and work. AWECC pays its respects to their elders past and present. Together, may we walk this land in a spirit of harmony, respect and cooperation.



Authorship and permissions

This report was compiled and edited by Brett Sanderson, Research and Policy Officer for Albury-Wodonga Ethnic Communities Council. All images contained in this report are used with permission. Where an image has been sourced from outside AWECC's archives, a source has been noted. Published, October 2017



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Welcome

Welcome to the Albury-Wodonga Ethnic Communities Council's *Annual Report 2016-17*. We hope you find this report informative and encouraging.

“Rome wasn’t built in a day...but they were laying bricks every hour”

As the above quote reminds us, great things don’t just happen overnight. They take time, effort and people. Along with a grand vision, great things also require consistent and constant determination. As we reflect on the steady, yet significant progress made in the past year, and as we look to the year ahead, let us be reminded that each ‘brick’ of time and effort counts!

Thanks to everyone - our staff, members, volunteers and sponsors - for your wonderful support this year and for laying ‘bricks’.

AWECC’s Vision & Mission

Our vision is of a harmonious Albury-Wodonga community, which celebrates the benefits of cultural diversity and enables all residents to participate and thrive.

Our mission is to remain an empowering, member-driven organisation. We advocate for equitable community participation, ensuring that the needs of our multicultural communities are expressed through engagement with all levels of government and the broader community.

AWECC’s four ‘pillars’ (focus areas) are:

1. Advocate for the needs of our members and their communities;
2. Celebrate cultural diversity;
3. Empower multicultural communities through active participation; and
4. Engage with the broader community.



AWECC: Your Organisation

Board of Directors 2016-17

Chairperson	Sue Portors
Deputy Chair	Kedar Sapkota
Secretary	Joseph Lumanog
Directors	Devang Uphadyay Nyombe Nyambura Shivaly Naicker Pratap Chauhan
Past Chairperson	Teju Chouhan

Our Staff & Contractors

- **Ben Flanigan**, Managing Director (commenced, September 2017)
 - **Lucie Wallis**, Community Liaison and Administration Officer
 - **Brett Sanderson**, Research & Policy Officer
- **Bhakti Dhamala**, Multicultural Support Worker and Interpreter

Our Members in 2016-17

Community and Associate Members

African Union Albury Wodonga
Albury Wodonga Hindu Vaidic Sewa Semiti Inc.
Albury Wodonga Indian Australian Association
Bhutanese Association in Albury Inc.
Ezou Family Drummers
Filipino-Australian Community of Albury Wodonga Inc.
Gateway Health
German-Austrian Australian Club (Wodonga) Inc.

Individual Members

We had **50 individual members**, representing **24 diverse ethnic backgrounds**.

We thank all of our members for supporting our community advocacy activities this year. As a 'member-driven' organisation, we only exist through the active participation, contributions, and feedback of our members. We look forward to your participation in 2017-18, and beyond.

Chairperson's Report

On behalf of Albury-Wodonga Ethnic Communities Council, Inc., it is my great pleasure to present the 2016-2017 Annual Report. As a community- led organisation, AWECC is determined to work with our members to ensure lasting and beneficial outcomes for our communities.

This year has seen a number of changes, successes and difficulties. All highlighting that we must continue to evolve, work as a team, be engaged and partner with our members and communities; like the many branches of a river – independent, yet reliant on each other.

First and foremost I'd like to acknowledge and thank our staff, our partners, and each and every volunteer. We are also grateful to our sponsors and key stakeholders for having a confidence in and commitment to AWECC. Foremost, we thank the Victorian *Multicultural and Social Cohesion Division* (formerly, OMAC) and Wodonga Council for their long-standing support and commitment to AWECC. A special mention must also be made about the Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria (ECCV) and The Hon. Cathy McGowan, local Member for Indi, for their consistent mentoring and encouragement as we move forward. Everything AWECC does, from the 'simple' tasks to lobbying our government, relies on these dedicated people and organisations. It could not happen without them.

AWECC has taken steps this year to re-focus our advocacy efforts, which is our core business. Both the current and past Board of Directors recognised that to have continued success in this area, and to utilise our staff in the best possible way, we needed a Managing Director. I would like to take this opportunity to officially announce that that goal has been realised. I am very proud to introduce our first Managing Director, Ben Flanigan.

Ben comes to AWECC with previous experience working with CALD communities, leading teams, a passion for advocacy and empowerment as well as expertise of business management. His appointment allows us to realign our staff's individual roles. Lucie Wallis will continue in her role as community liaison, and Brett Sanderson will now be able to focus on research, policy, and program development.

There is no doubt that this new structure will set AWECC in good position to continue to gain momentum as the regional voice of our ethnic communities.

Cont....

One of the great achievements this year was the initiation of the Ovens and Murray Multicultural Regional Area Partnership (OMMRAP) project. This project will enhance the established relationships we have with North East Multicultural Association (NEMA), Gateway Health and ethnic communities in our area, as well as strengthening the impact of our programs.

Overtime, the project will also see AWECC work more strategically with several local government area's, including the Rural City of Wangaratta, City of Wodonga, Indigo Shire, Towong Shire, and Albury City.

This year, we've strengthened our membership base by 48% (80% increase in community and associate members), and have developed a volunteering program, leading to an increase in volunteering opportunities.

To our current Directors, thank you for your time, energy and commitment to AWECC. I am very proud to be involved with such a great group of individuals. We have had many lively discussions around the table - all underpinned by the passion and common goals we share. I wish you success and happiness in all you do.

In closing, the *Annual Report* highlights many of AWECC's achievements from this past year. Please take the time to immerse yourself in the 2016-2017 'chapter of our story' as portrayed in the report. It is filled with amazing information about YOUR organisation, its members, and the foundations being laid that will empower our CALD communities to be strong communities made up of resilient individuals of all ages.

We look forward to the year ahead and encourage you to join with us on the journey.

Sue Portors
Chairperson



Highlights & Special Events



New office and (sort of) new staff!

AWECC is going places! This year, we moved to a bigger and more accessible office. Still located in Gateway Health Wodonga (upstairs in room F9), we now have a private meeting room, community computers for internet, scanner, and photocopying, and a boardroom table for meetings. The new office has also allowed space for our growing team of staff and volunteers.

In October 2016 we welcomed Lucie Wallis to the team. Lucie is our Community Liaison and Administration Officer. Her role is to provide member and volunteer support, assist with the running of AWECC events and programs, and generally keep our office running smoothly! She has been a wonderful addition to our small (but awesome) team. Brett Sanderson has taken on an exciting new role with AWECC as Research & Policy Officer.

We are also excited to announce that Ben Flanigan has commenced in the new role of Managing Director with AWECC in September 2017. If you haven't visited our new office yet, please come and join us for a cuppa soon!

Multicultural Youth Council

This year AWECC initiated a new Multicultural Youth Council (MYC). In June 2017, around 20 young people from diverse cultural backgrounds attend a launch dinner and forum. The forum provided an opportunity for young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds to talk about the issues and barriers affecting them, and to come up with some strategies to engage with multicultural young people, to ensure their voices are heard.

Since its formation, MYC representatives have been actively contributing to local initiatives, such as contributing to community consultations for the Wodonga Council's *Community Drug Action Plan*, and meeting with local Member for Indi, The Hon. Cathy McGowan MP. In the coming year, MYC representatives will be given increased opportunities to develop leadership capabilities, inform AWECC and local governments on the needs of multicultural young people, and get involved in community projects. A summary of the feedback and recommendations from the first forum in June 2017 can be found at www.awecc.org.au



Constance on the Edge

In June 2017, AWECC hosted a special screening of the documentary film 'Constance on the Edge' followed by a Q&A session at Regent Cinema's Albany. The film, which was shown as part of 'Refugee Week', was filmed in Wagga Wagga and follows Constance and her family as they settle in a new life in Australia, after fleeing war-torn Sudan.

Those in attendance at the film, approximately 90 people, were given insight into issues raised by the film, such as the racism, resettlement, and adjusting to life in a new country. There was also an informative Q&A session with Sebastine Ezou, who appears in the film, and Penny Vine, President of the Murray Valley Sanctuary Refugee Group (right).



City2City WalkRun

A small AWECC team (right) participated in the second 'Hume Bank City2City' walk/run event in February 2017 all for a good cause and charity. What *some* of the team lacked in athletic ability, they sure made up in enthusiasm!

Seniors LINK Program

After a successful Seniors LINK program last year, AWECC once again ran the program, providing opportunities for older members of our multicultural community to participate in social activities and to connect with local services. This year's highlights included a visit to the Corowa Community Garden (below left), and an excursion to the Old Beechworth Gaol (left) followed by lunch at the famous Beechworth Bakery. An information day was also a highlight with several information stalls for participants to learn about local services.

Seniors LINK is funded by the Victorian Department of Health and human Services, through the *Participation for CALD Seniors Grants Program*.



Refugee Week 2017

One of the main dates on the Border's community calendar is Refugee Week. Celebrated each year around mid June, Refugee Week raises awareness about the issues affecting refugees and celebrates the positive contributions made by refugees to Australian society. This year's 'family day' event was held on June 17, 2017 at Retro Lane Café, QEII Square, Albury.

With a few hundred people attending the event, there were many fun activities including jumping castles, Henna, cultural performances, face-painting, traditional foods, and of course, an Aussie barbecue!

The event is made possible through the contributions of local multicultural communities and in partnership with sponsor and lead organisations including AWECC, Albury City, City of Wodonga, Albury Wodonga Volunteer Resource Bureau, St Vincent de Paul Society, Multicultural Council of Wagga Wagga, STARTTS, and others.



Photo credit (below): The Border Mail.



Cultures @ The Cube

In its second year, AWECC partnered with several organisations to put on Cultures @ The Cube in Wodonga, on March 18, 2017. There were performances such as, dancing, Aboriginal song and dance, cultural dress parade, the Persian daf drum (below), market stalls, traditional food and barbecue, and plenty of activities for the kids!

Harmony Day & Holi

This year's Harmony Day event was hosted by Albury City Council at the wood-fired ovens at Hovell Tree Park on March 19. Along with cultural performances, stalls, traditional foods, and activities. The event was followed by the popular *Holi: Festival of Colour*.



Wodonga 'Citizen of the Year'

'Bamboo hut to top citizen'; That's how The Border Mail described Teju Chouhan's journey from growing up in a refugee camp in Nepal, to receiving Wodonga's highest honour, its 'Citizen of the Year' award in January 2017.

Teju, who is a current AWECC member and its inaugural Chairperson, was recognized for his tireless volunteering efforts and work in the community. Teju was also a driving force behind the formation of the Albury-Wodonga Ethnic Communities Council in 2014.



Teju with his award in January 2017. Photo credit: The Border Mail.



Photo credit (left): The Border Mail.

AGM 2016

Our 3rd Annual General Meeting was held at Retro Lane Café in Albury in December 2017. Our guest speaker was Chris Hazelman, former Shepparton Mayor and Manager of Ethnic Communities Council of Shepparton & District, who shared many insights into the challenges and successes of multiculturalism in Shepparton.

AWECC member communities provided some entertainment after the meeting - traditional food, dancing, drumming, and a history lesson from the German-Austrian Australian Club (see picture, right).



Walk Together

AWECC coordinated Albury-Wodonga's first ever 'Walk Together' event on October 21, 2016. The event was attended by well over 200 enthusiastic walkers. *Walk Together* is a nation-wide event, led by the organisation 'Welcome to Australia'.

AWECC received great support from Mungabareena Aboriginal Corporation, Gateway Health, Parklands Albury Wodonga, Murray Valley Sanctuary Refugee Group, Wodonga Senior Secondary College, Albury City, and City of Wodonga.

Sharing the Learnings

As part of funding through the Scanlon Foundation's 'Refuge of Hope' grants program, provided through Border trust, AWECC has been facilitating a 'Sharing the Learnings' network. This program has provided AWECC with greater opportunities to partner with local organisations and projects, promote resources, and share knowledge.

In June 2017, AWECC partnered with Gateway Health to host a Refugee Week lunch and celebration event. This event gave several groups and organisations the opportunity to share some of the programs they are offering to empower multicultural communities. AWECC staff will also be sharing learnings from an 'Inclusive and Cohesive Communities' Conference they will be attending in November 2017.

Advocacy & Representation

Council's, Conversations, and Cathy

This year, AWECC representatives have had opportunities to discuss issues affecting our Local multicultural communities with local government and state government representatives, as well as with Federal Member for Indi, The Hon. Cathy McGowan MP.

On April 22, 2017, Cathy met with AWECC directors and staff (right), to discuss several issues, including visas, penalty rates, regional migration, employer sponsored visas, and the government's proposed changes to the citizenship test and English language requirements.

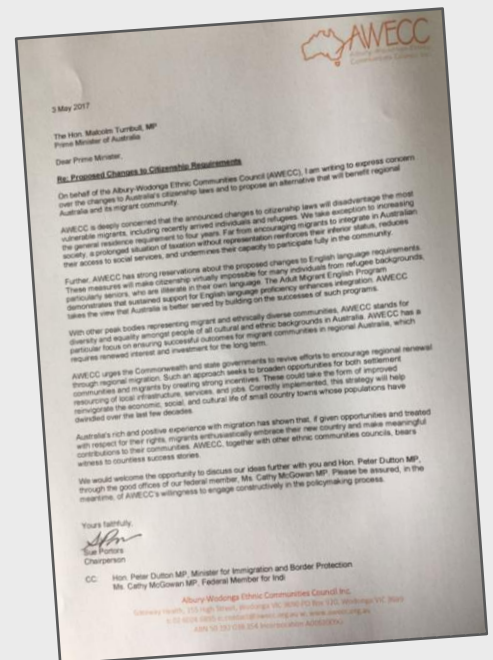


Dear Prime Minister...

This year AWECC showed its support for members and local ethnic communities, through a letter penned to the Prime Minister of Australia, The Hon. Malcom Turnbull MP.

In the letter, AWECC Chairperson, Sue Portors expressed concerns about the proposed changes to Australia's Citizenship legislation. AWECC argued that tougher English language requirements and lengthier application waiting periods, would reinforce an 'inferior status' on migrants. The letter also claimed that the changes would reduce some residents' "access to social services", and undermine "their capacity to participate fully in the community".

AWECC is committed to advancing the interests of our local multicultural communities, and will continue to report to local, state and commonwealth government on the needs of our members and communities.



Nyombe Leads the Way

This year, AWECC Board Director, Nyombe Nyambura made a presentation at the Amaranth Foundation in Corowa, sharing his insights into the impacts of traumatic experiences on refugees and immigrants and the implication to mental health case workers. Nyombe completed his clinical Social Work placement at Amaranth Foundation during his La Trobe University studies.

Partners & Stakeholders

We would like to thank our partners and stakeholders for their commitment to a diverse and inclusive Albury-Wodonga, and thank them for their generous support, sponsorship and collaborations in what has been a successful 2016/17. We look forward to strengthening our partnerships in 2017/18, and beyond.

- Albury City Council
- Albury Wodonga Health
- Albury Wodonga Interfaith Network
- Albury Wodonga Volunteer Resource Bureau
- Border Trust
- Charles Sturt University
- Community Accessibility Inc.
- Corowa Community Garden
- Department of Fair Trading (NSW)
- Department of Human Services (Centrelink)
- Department of Premier and Cabinet, Victoria
- Department of Social Services
- Ethnic Communities Council of NSW
- Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria
- Ethnic Council of Shepparton & District
- Federation of Ethnic Communities Council of Australia (FECCA)
- Gateway Health
- Intereach
- La Trobe University
- Leadership Victoria
- Multicultural Affairs and Social Cohesion (MASC) division, Victoria
- Multicultural Council of Wagga Wagga
- Multicultural NSW
- Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network
- Mungabareena Aboriginal Corporation
- Murray Valley Sanctuary Refugee Group
- North East Multicultural Association (NEMA)
- North East Water
- Office of The Hon. Cathy McGowan MP, Federal Member for Indi
- Parklands Albury Wodonga
- Refugee Council of Australia (RCOA)
- Regent Cinema Albury
- Riverina Institute of TAFE
- Rural City of Wangaratta
- Scanlon Foundation
- St Vincent de Paul Society
- Victorian Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)
- Victorian Multicultural Commission (VMC)
- Victorian Women's Trust
- Wodonga City Council
- Wodonga Senior Secondary College
- Welcome to Australia
- Westmont Aged Care Services Ltd.

Beneficiaries

Through our commitment to empowering and enabling local ethnic communities, and supporting organisations who share our vision, we have offered significant funding and in-kind support to several community groups and organisations in 2016-17. These included;

- Albury Wodonga African Youth
- Albury Wodonga Indian-Australian Association
- Albury Wodonga Volunteer Resource Bureau (AWCE program)
- Bhutanese Association in Albury (BAA) Inc.
- Ezou Family Drummers
- Filipino-Australian Community of Albury-Wodonga (FACAW)
- Gateway Health (Umoja Cooking Group)
- German Austrian Australian Club (Wodonga) Inc.
- Leadership Victoria - New & Emerging Communities Leadership Program (Wodonga)
- Mungabareena Aboriginal Corporation
- New & Emerging Communities Leadership Program (Wodonga)
- Welcome to Australia
- Wodonga Bhutanese Community Inc.
- Wodonga Senior Secondary College

Statement of Income & Expenditure

For the year ended 30th June 2017

Independently Audited by RJ Sanderson & Associates Pty Ltd, Albury NSW on 26th September 2017

	2017	2016
Income		
Fundraising & Donations	873.00	447.80
Grant - Rural City of Wangaratta (OMMRAP)	95,447.00	0.00
Grant - Wodonga City Council (PMO Grant)	30,000.00	43,831.00
Grant - Wodonga City Council (CIG)	0.00	5,500.00
Grant - Wodonga City Council (Multicultural Events)	2,926.11	0.00
Grant - Dept of Health & Human Services (Seniors Link)	0.00	5,000.00
Grant - Albury City Council (Community & Cultural Grants)	0.00	1,000.00
Grant - Border Trust	0.00	3,500.00
Interest	692.64	116.14
Memberships	719.05	340.00
Reimbursements	85.16	556.48
Sales	1,113.64	0.00
	<u>131,856.60</u>	<u>60,291.42</u>
Expenditure		
Administration & Office Expenses	4,964.64	105.16
Advertising & Marketing	2,583.61	0.00
Bank Fees	5.13	0.00
Community Enabling Grants	11,000.00	0.00
Community Events	8,033.12	438.25
Community Transport	924.41	0.00
Compliance	209.18	0.00
Consulting & Accounting	363.60	0.00
Contractors	18,328.50	0.00
Insurance	2,585.23	0.00
Interpreter & Translation Services	1,875.00	0.00
Memberships	165.00	0.00
Program & Service Delivery	812.84	44.70
Seniors LINK Program*	0.00	4,204.75
Sharing the Learnings Program*	0.00	126.00
Subscriptions	113.79	0.00
Telephone & Internet	1,558.53	306.01
Training & Development	4,613.08	0.00
Travel Costs	1,435.42	0.00
	<u>59,571.08</u>	<u>5,224.87</u>
Net Revenue	<u>72,285.52</u>	<u>55,066.55</u>

* Expenses for these program have been included in other expense lines

Statement of Assets & Liabilities

For the year ended 30th June 2017

Independently Audited by RJ Sanderson & Associates Pty Ltd, Albury NSW on 26th September 2017

	2017	2016
Assets		
Cash at Bank	128,406.92	62,882.51
Cash on Hand	14.05	87.70
Debtors	380.00	0.00
Visa Cards	1,187.37	0.00
Fixed Assets	1,556.31	0.00
GST Refundable	1,518.67	0.00
	<u>133,063.32</u>	<u>62,970.21</u>
Liabilities		
Creditors	0.00	2,192.41
	<u>0.00</u>	<u>2,192.41</u>
Net Assets	<u>133,063.32</u>	<u>60,777.80</u>
Retained Earnings		
Opening Balance	60,777.80	5,711.25
Net Revenue	72,285.52	55,066.55
Closing Balance	<u>133,063.32</u>	<u>60,777.80</u>

