

NEWSLETTER



Ethnic Communities Council
of Western Australia Inc

**SPECIAL
ISSUE
September-
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The Ethnic Communities Council of WA acknowledges and pays tribute to the Whadjuk people of the Noongar Nation and their Elders past and present as the Traditional Custodians of the Country (Boodja) on which we work.

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Western Australia and recognise their continuing and cultural connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respect to them, their cultures, and to Elders both past and present.

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Joint Statement

FROM THE CEO AND PRESIDENT

There comes a time in every organisation's journey when the board and the executives need to embark on a journey of evolution. Often, when organisations were first created, they were operating in a different environment with circumstances pertaining to the needs of their communities and stakeholders of that time. This is true for ECCWA. Over the next three months, we will be reviewing our work and gathering feedback from our stakeholders, gaining insight and letting that knowledge drive our future. We are deep diving, seeking innovation and exploring best practices to firm our foundation for the future.

In early 2024, we will be relaunching ECCWA. We would welcome your thoughts, ideas, views and importantly your expectations. In the following pages, you will see a link to Survey Monkey. Please use the link to provide feedback to us completely anonymously. United in our purpose, the Board and the Executive team at ECCWA invite you to tread this path with us.

Sadhana & Angelena



Dr Sadhana Bose
President



Angelena Fixter
CEO

President's Message

KAYA. WANJU.

The explosion of colours from blooming acacias, banksias, Kangaroo paw, Mooja, mixed with the chirping of many young bird families like the Koolbardies (magpies), heralded 'Kambarang'– the Noongar season represented by the colour yellow (October–November). We are now approaching Birak (December–January), the Noongar season represented by red colour. There will be many fledglings venturing out of their nests, reptiles shedding their old skin and baby frogs transforming into adults. Nature's changing seasons remind us that change is the only constant and that transformation is inevitable when change is underway.

Governance, management and operational reforms have driven our work during 2024. As the year draws to a close, our new CEO is firmly in the saddle connecting with stakeholders in the community, LGA, and State and Federal governments, whilst reviewing ECCWA's financial sustainability. Continuing with the fast-paced transformative changes underway, our board subcommittees are driving innovative collaborations with community organisations. We have also been celebrating cultural festivals with members whilst engaging in diverse policy consultations and conferences with potential to impact WA CaLD communities. A key event was the October 2024 FECCA Conference in Brisbane. It saw ECCWA participate actively in FECCA elections, the new board formation and in creating new inter & intra state relationships.

The board has simultaneously said many goodbyes and many welcomes. We have four new board members: Eugene Low (Chung Wah), Kumar Goteti (Jeeyar Education Trust) and Tinashe La (Centre for Women Safety and Welfare). The departure of Seren Ulusoy earlier in the year (past Secretary) and Theresa Ng (outgoing Treasurer) was mixed with the arrival of Abhishek Puri (incoming Treasurer) and promotion of Emem Udo (current secretary). We have also successfully engaged with the remote rural region of Pilbarra.

Highlighting unjustifiable inequalities that directly impact on the health and wellbeing of WA's CaLD communities, ECCWA advocated, built capacity, partnered with and facilitated community consultations on matters of racism, human rights and social inclusion. Our [2023–2024 annual report](#) covers the details. Reflecting on the year, we have made much progress in building bridges with CaLD communities. Towards this, we worked with multiple agencies and sectors to address expressed and felt community gaps and needs, particularly in health and wellbeing. Our successful community collaborations over the past eight months have translated to grants for specific projects aimed at senior citizens of the CaLD community, prevention of family and domestic violence, and screening for common cancers. ECCWA has also been successful in collaborating with ECCNSW in rolling out the Speak My Language extension program.

President's Message

CONTINUED

ECCWA has been successful in achieving the priorities described in the April 2024 edition.

For this, I wish to express my gratitude to our 'tiny yet mighty' team of ECCWA staff and volunteers for their hard work and great commitment at ensuring delivery of ECCWA operations in the midst of organisational transformation. I would like to particularly acknowledge the invaluable contributions of Isabella Karelis, Anbumoly Kuppusamy, and Sharan Kraemer. I also wish to express my gratitude to all past and current 2024 board members for helping ECCWA navigate the challenges that accompany organisational reforms and for helping identify key 2024 priorities whilst ensuring successful completion of the 2023 work program. Keeping with the trend to shine the spotlight on one member of the board in each newsletter, this edition has Syed Muzzafar Ahmed sharing why he chose to join ECCWA Board and what drives him to give back to the community.

As we turn the corner, I hope ECCWA comes across as a revitalised peak body addressing issues important to WA ethnic communities. My 2025 vision for ECCWA continues to be: A strong, cohesive, "Can do" Board; Financial transparency and enhanced prosperity; Initiatives fostering the community's sense of belonging; Collaborations that empower our most vulnerable ethnic communities to participate in WA's thriving economy and society. Towards this, a board subcommittee is reviewing the ECCWA Constitution and Policy Manual to ensure we are 'Fit for purpose' - we invite all members to submit your feedback and suggestions using this [form](#).

Or you can copy and paste this link: <https://forms.office.com/r/KyKZR3Fvnl>

Always available to connect and communicate, you are welcome to email me on president@eccwa.org.au. Alternately, I am very keen to see and hear about the fantastic work that you or your organisation is doing in the CaLD space.

Have an enjoyable read!

Dr Sadhana Bose



CEO's Message

As we discussed in our introduction, we are currently experiencing a period of extensive change. On a personal and professional level, I believe that the success of any organisation, whether it is an NGO or a commercial business, depends on the absence of ego or self-interest. For me, the key principles that ECCWA is striving to promote include reaching out, making an impact, and the ability to listen and act for the greater good. We are currently in the midst of a transformation process, which will be monitored throughout the rest of this financial year.

October to November: The first stage involves immersing ourselves in our current practices, refining procedures, seeking candid feedback from our stakeholders, and engaging in exploration. During this period, we will be less active in our day-to-day operations as our focus shifts internally.

November to January: The second stage will focus on addressing issues, overcoming obstacles, and establishing our foundations.

January to June: The third stage will involve creating a pathway and a roadmap to achieve our goals.

We appreciate your patience and understanding. We are transitioning from a historical and traditional organisation to a contemporary and current organisation. The board and the team are unified in our pursuit of transformation. With our equity and purpose as our driving forces, we will rise together. I am excited to share our plans for the new year in 2025.

We encourage the ECCWA community to fill out the short 5 minute survey on Survey Monkey in order to provide feedback on how we can improve as an organisation. Stakeholder feedback is vital for us to ensure that we meet the needs of our members. This survey will be live as of Monday 2nd December, and will be distributed to our members.

Angelena Fixter
CEO
ECCWA

Board Spotlight



Syed, a civil engineer by profession, migrated to Perth from Bangladesh in 2012. A passionate community connector and a social justice activist, Syed founded Ubuntu Australia (a not-for-profit charity) in 2019 to support the new migrants, multicultural communities, and disadvantaged Australians. Ubuntu Australia runs various capacity building programs for new migrants and multicultural communities and community aid programs for vulnerable people. Syed also founded the Ubuntu Australia Kiva Lending Team to provide financial support to members of the underserved communities of the world.

Syed served in the Executive Committee of the Bangladesh Association of WA for six years in various positions and was the General Secretary of the Association. As an ardent supporter of new migrants and multiculturalism in WA, Syed was a Cultural Ambassador of the City of Canning for two years representing the Bangladeshi community. He was also a Member of the Strategic Reference Group of the City of Canning for the implementation of the very popular Hillview Intercultural Community Centre project.

Always keen to support the multicultural communities and vulnerable people, Syed, as a Member of New Migrant Advisory Group – Volunteering WA provides recommendations to Volunteering WA on how to reduce the barriers to volunteering for Newly Arrived Migrants in WA. He is an active mentor of two popular mentoring programs - Kaleidoscope Mentoring Program and UWA Career Mentor Link program for the past five years and also co-facilitated a CaLD men's cancer group discussion organised by Health Consumers' Council.

Syed is also a Community Member of Infectious Diseases Community Reference Group, The Kids Institute Australia and helped the City of Canning (as a Cultural Consultant) in its Better Beginnings Family Literacy program. He was one of the 16 scholarship recipients of the Auspire's Multicultural Leadership Program 2023.

FECCA CONFERENCE

FECCA Conference 2024, Brisbane (Queensland) Highlights

It is just over a month since the Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia conference ([FECCA Conference 2024](#)) took place on October 16-17 at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre, in partnership with the Ethnic Communities Council of Queensland (ECCQ). This year's theme was, "Our Experiences. Our Future,." With more than 700 registered attendees, the conference was a powerful reminder of the strengths and challenges that culturally and linguistically diverse communities navigate across Australia. Angelena Fixter, Emem Udo and Dr Sadhana Bose were WA delegates at the conference and found the incredible experience inspiring, full of learning and great for [networking](#). It was an honour and delight to meet Her Excellency The Honourable Governor-General of Australia Sam Mostyn AC at the Conference!

Outgoing FECCA chair, Carlo Carli, said a national anti-racism framework could "dismantle" the entrenched problems endured by people of CaLD communities. ECCWA is pleased to announce that our team and member organisations contributed significantly to the FECCA led national consultation for the report commissioned by the AHRC. This [Anti-Racism Framework report](#) was launched at the Conference. The report highlights systemic racism in Australia, affecting people across health services, schools, workplaces, and interactions with police.

ECCWA is highly appreciative of the thought-provoking opening address by The Hon. Mark Butler MP. We thank the honourable minister for [joining the FECCA conference](#). The Hon. Julian Hill MP also shared his vision and plans for a more successful Multicultural Australia.

A key takeaway for ECCWA was the panel discussion on Social Cohesion, Anti-Discrimination, and Anti-Racism, which followed on from the launch of FECCA's Anti-Racism Framework report, as part of the morning keynote with Giridharan Sivaraman, Race Discrimination Commissioner, Australian Human Rights Commission. The Conference concluded with an introduction of the [newly elected Chair and Board](#), which will guide FECCA's work over the coming years, led by Peter Doukas OAM, who has taken on the role of Chair. ECCWA is represented by Dr Sadhana Bose on the new board. ECCWA looks forward to proactively engaging in future conferences.

FECCA CONFERENCE



Forced Marriage Consultation

On September 17, 2024, ECCWA hosted a vital consultation on forced marriage, facilitated by Dr. Lisha van Reyk. This event addressed critical issues surrounding forced marriage within CaLD communities and brought together community members, leaders, and professionals to explore its legal, social, and cultural implications.

Key discussions included distinguishing forced marriage and arranged marriage, where individuals lack true consent, from arranged marriage, where both parties agree. Attendees highlighted gaps in legislation and reporting, particularly the need for clearer laws empowering celebrants and law enforcement to act when a forced marriage is suspected. The event also addressed the lack of educational programs focused on consent and legal consequences of forced marriage, especially in schools and communities.

Challenges raised included victims' isolation from their families after leaving forced marriages, economic barriers faced by those trying to gain independence, and lack of safe housing. Attendees also discussed the difficulty of addressing forced marriage within culturally sensitive environments, where intervention risks backlash from communities and families.

Several suggestions were made, including educational programs for schools and community leaders, increased engagement with faith-based leaders, and the development of culturally sensitive support services. There was a strong call for better legal frameworks, more resources for victims, and improved awareness campaigns targeting communities at risk.

The consultation provided a platform for open discussion, aiming to create stronger protections and support for individuals at risk of forced marriage. Ultimately, this consultation is also a part of a broader effort to inform a submission to the government for the Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Branch Attorney-General's department. The submission is aimed at enhancing protections for individuals at risk of forced marriage, while maintaining cultural respect and sensitivity.

Forced Marriage Consultation



Health Information Sessions

ECCWA hosted two Health Information Sessions for the CaLD community, offering valuable guidance on water safety, sexual health, and hepatitis prevention. The first session was held on the 8th October and the second on the 30th October. The event featured speakers from Royal Life Saving WA, the WA AIDS Council (WAAC), and Hepatitis WA, who tailored their presentations to address the unique health needs and challenges faced by CaLD communities.

Royal Life Saving WA opened the session by discussing essential water safety practices, addressing the specific risks of WA's beaches, rivers, and lakes. Their presentation highlighted common hazards, such as riptides and strong currents, as well as strategies for safe swimming in both open and home-based water environments, underscoring the importance of awareness and preparation in preventing drowning incidents.

The WA AIDS Council (WAAC) provided an overview of sexual health, emphasising the significance of STI prevention, testing, and support services. Acknowledging cultural sensitivities around this topic, WAAC aimed to reduce stigma and ensure participants were aware of accessible, confidential support options that enable individuals to manage their health without fear of judgement.

Hepatitis WA concluded the event with an informative talk on hepatitis prevention, particularly hepatitis B, focusing on early detection and the importance of vaccination. They noted that public awareness and immunisation are critical to stopping the spread of hepatitis and encouraged attendees to explore vaccination as a key preventive measure.

These health sessions provided a comprehensive and practical approach to staying informed and safe, reinforcing ECCWA's commitment to supporting the wellbeing of CaLD communities across Western Australia.



ROYAL LIFE SAVING
WESTERN AUSTRALIA



hep
wa

Health Information Sessions



Cancer Screening

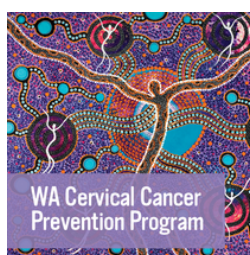
CANCER SCREENING INFORMATION SESSIONS

In conjunction with the Social Policy Group, ECCWA received a grant to hold three cancer screening sessions for the CaLD community. These sessions provided valuable insights into the importance of early detection, cancer prevention and the various screening options available. Our expert speakers came from BreastScreen WA, Bowel Cancer Screening Program of the Cancer Council of WA, and WA Cervical Cancer Prevention Program.

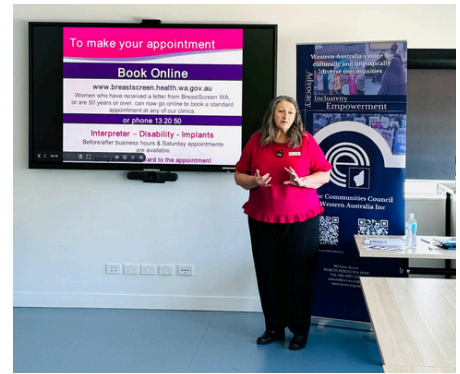
ECCWA hosted three successful cancer screening sessions on 28th October, 1st November and 11th November. Each session was to educate the CaLD community on Breast, Bowel, and Cervical cancer awareness and screening.

Our sessions also had interpreters for attendees. Participants loved the presentations being in their own home languages. This increased their willingness to speak to family members and friends about the topics. Most participants knew about the screening programs, but they were held back by their lack of confidence in their English language skills. Hearing about the freely available interpreters was a plus. The presentations were translated in real time for the participants, which fostered a safe and inclusive environment.

Well done to the ECCWA team for putting this together in such a short amount of time, and thank you to the Social Policy Group for your support.



Cancer Screening



AGM

On Tuesday 19th November 2024, ECCWA hosted our AGM. Thank you to everyone who joined us to listen and understand our journey for the past year and next few months. We are so grateful for the wonderful turnout and the positivity that was shared throughout the room.

We have kept our members informed of the changes underway, to ensure that we thrive long into the future for all those we represent across WA.

We are aware that our current focus on navigating these changes has led to limitations and a refocus in our resources and human capital as we navigate the changes. As a result, we are not able to respond to requests related to advocacy, legal assistance, research, partnerships, community engagement outreach, volunteer positions, and student placements until the new year.

But, we are excited by the prospects awaiting us and cannot wait to return in the new year with a fresh perspective, fresh ideas and a fresh strategy.

If you are interested in reading about what ECCWA has been up to the past financial year, you can read our annual report [here](#).



AGM



Feedback

Please do not forget to fill out these two stakeholder feedback surveys to help ECCWA grow and maintain longevity.

Constitution review feedback form: <https://forms.office.com/r/KyKZR3FvnL>

ECCWA improvements feedback form: WILL BE LIVE THE WEEK OF 2ND DECEMBER. Please check your emails and also our social media for updates on the survey when the link is active.

Thank YOU!

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Department of
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