

February 2025

[ECCWA.ORG.AU](http://ECCWA.ORG.AU)

# NEWSLETTER



Ethnic Communities Council  
of Western Australia Inc

**February 2025**

## 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.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>President's Message</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>CEO's Message</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>International Women's Day</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Staff Spotlight</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Board Spotlight</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Subcommittee Finance EOI</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Tamil Heritage Month</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Community</b>	<b>20</b>

# President's Message

KAYA. WANJU.

The Noongar season of Bunuru (February–March) aka, “Second Summer” is underway. Historically, hot easterly winds are tempered by coastal breezes and the season is lush with full blooms of white Jarrah flowers, Marri, Ghost Gums and ripened red female Zamia cones. Changing seasons remind me of my April 2024 newsletter quote: *“When change happens at the right time, for the right reasons, it opens up opportunities and possibilities. A new board brings new opportunities and I am excited in anticipation of the progress we will make collectively, continuing to improve the way we connect, communicate and create a healthier society.”* I remain drawn to ECCWA because of the opportunities posed by the challenges within (as much as the challenges of a rapidly evolving ethnic population in multicultural, pluralistic Australia). ECCWA Board shall continue to reflect on, “Why are we doing what we are doing? How will our communities benefit?”. For the aim is to build a, “fit for purpose” peak body with focus on efficiency, effectiveness, innovation, financial sustainability and advocating for social justice.

It gives me immense pleasure to share that the Board has successfully completed a year of accountable, transparent governance and innovative management. Some successes include initiating long overdue organisational reforms; resuming regular communications with stakeholders; introducing a formal recruitment and rigorous appointment process for the CEO position; creating new collaborations and (hold your breath) taking that giant leap of faith by continuously embracing the uncomfortable(s) that come with reforming.

I wish to express my gratitude to all ECCWA staff and volunteers for working with enthusiasm and great commitment while the organisation continues to reform and restructure. As you will discover in this edition, Angelena and her team are playing an invaluable role in this resurgence and renewal of ECCWA. Right now, a key focus was to deliver a memorable International Women’s Day 2025 on 8 March.

This newsletter shines the spotlight on Abhishek Puri, the current treasurer. He has shared a bit about himself, his reasons for joining ECCWA and what drives him to give back to the community. As we move ahead with our ambitions for ECCWA, I seek your expression of interest towards a new subcommittee led by Abhishek: financial scrutiny and risk management.

# President's Message

CONTINUED

February saw a visitor from FECCA – Jill Morgan AM. Jill is FECCA Board Senior Deputy Chair (Women) and lead for the Multicultural Alliance of Women of Australia (MAWA), a FECCA NWA initiative. Many of you will know Jill from her years living, working and volunteering in WA.

Lastly, I am pleased to share that there is a Western Australian perspective on the national stage, with my recent delegation as Chair, Governance Committee for the Australian Multicultural Health Collaborative. The AMHC is a FECCA initiative. Watch this space as there may be opportunities to contribute.

Always available to connect and communicate, I welcome your email to me on [president@eccwa.org.au](mailto:president@eccwa.org.au). I am equally happy to see and hear about the fantastic work that you or your organisation is doing.

Have an enjoyable read!



Dr Sadhana Bose





# CEO's Message

The team at ECCWA wishes you the very best for 2025.

We forged ahead with our ambitious plans of evolution, and during the festive period, we focused on completing our housekeeping tasks and setting a course for the year ahead.

Thanks to the hard work of our team, I am thrilled to announce that we have successfully turned our mighty little ship around. Whilst we have a long journey ahead to develop it further, we have already made significant progress.

We have restructured ECCWA, and with a solid foundation in place, I'm confident that, with your support, we will transform into a distinctly different organisation by the end of this financial year. In the coming months, we will announce our new organisational structure and engage with members about redesigning our membership offerings.

Thank you to those who participated in the SurveyMonkey survey and reached out to share their insights. Your support is genuinely appreciated. We are excited to launch new projects and innovations that will benefit our members and the communities they serve, and we invite you to partner with us where possible.

Our major event in 2025 was International Women's Day.

This saw ECCWA stand side by side with our sisters across the globe as we lifted up the voices of our amazing women. We will collate their message to the future five generations to come, advocating for parity across the sexes and publish our results on our website.

Whilst we continue to rebuild our organisation and strengthen revenues streams for the future we are also embarking on some new partnerships and projects... more to come.

Vital to our success is a strong foundation and on that note...

We are excited to share our latest initiative aimed at creating both a physical and technological framework to identify and address systemic issues affecting our communities.

# CEO's Message

This initiative has come from the feedback we received from members. We know that to be the peak advocacy body, the single most important element is to understand what the strategic barriers and roadblocks are for equity and once understood, represent the voices of our communities.

To achieve this goal, we envision the establishment of a comprehensive platform that will gather and synthesise information about the challenges faced by ethnic communities. This platform will not only allow us to understand these issues more profoundly but will also enable us to advocate effectively for systemic change from both community and government perspectives.

We are in the process of rebuilding ECCWA into a contemporary organisation that truly reflects the needs and aspirations of the communities we serve.

Your support is critical. We are seeking written endorsements in the form of letters or emails that outline your support for this initiative. These endorsements will significantly strengthen our application for a small grant that is directly related to developing this platform.

If you could take a moment to express your support and send your letters or emails directly to [admin@eccwa.org.au](mailto:admin@eccwa.org.au), we would be grateful.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment and support. Together, we can make a meaningful difference in the lives of those we serve, this is our goal.

I extend my gratitude to our members, OMI, and the Minister's office for their partnership and support. Thank you to everyone who collaborates with us for the greater good.

At ECCWA we know that 'limitations are merely constructs of the mind'.

*Angelena Fixter*  
CEO  
ECCWA

# International Women's Day

On Saturday, March 8th, ECCWA hosted an intimate International Women's Day event titled A Montage of Women, where participants shared messages for the five generations to come. This theme was inspired by the World Health Organisation's conclusion that achieving gender parity will take five generations.

The event featured 16 women from different areas of the world and walks of life who each gave a monologue on stage, sharing their stories of empowerment and overcoming challenges. Their speeches were important in sharing messages of strength to the next five female generations.

Our speakers came from the following countries: New Zealand, Ethiopia, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Italy, Malaysia China, India, Bhutan, Rwanda, Vietnam, Myanmar, South Africa, and Bosnia.

We are so grateful to each guest speaker for dedicating time to prepare for this event and for having the courage to stand on a stage and speak out. Without you strong women, this event could not have happened.

ECCWA is happy to share that we had a full house in attendance. Thank you to the Blue Room Theatre, our sponsor HSBC, and ECCWA staff for pulling this all together. We received amazing feedback from attendees who loved the event and felt truly inspired and uplifted by the stories of the 16 women. They thoroughly enjoyed the innovative approach to the production and the event.

After several months of internal change with the organisation, we are proud to say that this was a wonderful turning point in showcasing our commitment to systemic advocacy, uplifting the voices of our ethnic communities across WA and their peak bodies. This would not have been possible without the dedication of our tiny team of staff who gave their time, energy and souls to making this happen. If you ever doubt the strength of equity or team work, come to ECCWA and they will show you what is possible.



# International Women's Day





# International Women's Day





# Staff Spotlight



**ANGELENA FIXTER**  
*CEO*

Angelena's work spans the human rights, social care, health, disability, childcare, housing, and veterinary sectors in both Australia and the UK. She has held leadership roles as a NED, CEO, and Strategic Business Consultant across for-purpose, for-profit, and public sectors, driving innovation, cultural reform, and business transformation.

With extensive experience in mergers, acquisitions, and company turnarounds, she has successfully led organisations through financial and reputational recovery, strategic growth, and operational excellence.

A passionate and innovative leader, Angelena has chaired housing boards, developed complex business strategies, and played a key role in transitioning companies from the public to the commercial sector. She has worked with diverse and remote communities, built successful multi-agency partnerships, and driven business success with customer satisfaction levels in the high 90s. Her expertise includes governance, equity, social enterprise, political environments, crisis management, and union negotiations, making her a dynamic force in organisational leadership and change.

# Staff Spotlight



**ANBUMOLY KUPPUSAMY**  
*COMMUNITY LIAISON SPECIALIST*

Anbumoly Kuppusamy is a Community Liaison Specialist and a registered counsellor with a Master's in Counselling, dedicated to supporting diverse communities through mental health awareness, language empowerment, and community development. With over 20 years of experience as a registered nurse in Malaysia and Saudi Arabia, she later transitioned into nursing education, mentoring future healthcare professionals as a nursing lecturer. Building on her passion for holistic well-being and advocacy, she then pursued counselling, where she now empowers individuals and communities through tailored support and engagement.

Since migrating to Western Australia, Anbumoly has been actively involved in community development and advocacy, working with local councils, multicultural organisations, and the Ethnic Communities Council of Western Australia (ECCWA) to promote social cohesion, multilingual mental health initiatives, and cultural inclusion. She has volunteered as a Tamil language teacher, served as a judge for language competitions, and led projects focusing on health promotion and intercultural projects. In recognition of her contributions, she was appointed as Cultural Ambassador for the City of Canning in 2024. She also serves as the Secretary of the Tamil Seniors Association and a founding board member of a non-profit organisation.

Beyond her community engagement, Anbumoly is also a director of a family business in Malaysia and Australia, showcasing her leadership in both social and entrepreneurial spaces. Passionate about advocacy, empowerment, and lifelong learning, she continues to lead and inspire grassroots initiatives that uplift multicultural and marginalized communities

# Staff Spotlight



**AMY MCNAUGHTEN**  
*OPERATIONS MANAGER*

Amy is a passionate leader in community engagement, program delivery, and social impact. As General Manager at Hato Hone St John in Aotearoa New Zealand, she strengthened relationships with Māori (indigenous) communities and local organisations, managing over 5,000 volunteers to improve health outcomes.

She led a national menstrual equity initiative, distributing 200,000 period products in partnership with Indigenous organisations, and expanded Variety's Kiwi Kids sponsorship program to support 8,000 children. Selected as an NGO participant at the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) 2023, Amy brings lived experience as a Māori (Ngāti Tūwharetoa) and LGBTQI+ leader, advocating for women and marginalised communities.

# Staff Spotlight



**MICHELLE FABIANA**  
*FINANCE OFFICER*

Michelle Fabiana is a Brazilian professional with experience in accounting and information systems. With 15 years in accounting and three years in IT, she has held various roles, including business analysis and tax compliance. Currently based in Australia, she balances work and studies while building her career. She values organisation, efficiency, and continuous learning, always seeking to improve her skills and adapt to new challenges. Michelle is married to Ronaldo, and together they are creating a stable and comfortable life.

In her free time, she enjoys a calm yet active lifestyle. She loves spending time at the beach, meditating, and going for walks to keep her mind clear and her body moving. These activities help her maintain balance and focus. She also appreciates quiet, organised spaces that support her well-being and quality of life.

# Staff Spotlight



**LAURA GOODWIN**  
*EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT*

With 24 years' experience of administration and management in the industries of Finance, Law, Community Services and the NDIS, Laura has a well-rounded knowledge of these professional industries.

Having worked as EA to the CEO for some of the largest Organisations across Australia Laura has extensive c-suite experience communicating directly with other CEOs and the Board of Directors.

Laura has a steady, courteous, and professional personality and is known for her thoughtful and confidential nature.

In her spare time Laura loves the beach, travelling, and is also an aspiring fiction author.



**ISABELLA KARELIS**  
*EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT*

Isabella is the Executive Assistant at ECCWA, bringing a year of experience supporting the CEO and her colleagues, and managing the operations of the organisation. She holds a Bachelor of Philosophy (Honours) in Political Science & International Relations, and Italian Studies, and is currently studying a Master of Commerce specialising in Management at UWA. Isabella seeks to combine management with culture to further promote and support diversity in Western Australia. Passionate about working with people of diverse cultures and learning about different languages, she believes in collaboration within communities to further enhance intercultural understanding and awareness.



# Board Spotlight



## **ABHISHEK PURI**

Abhishek is a Chartered Accountant and a proud member of Chartered Accountants Australia & New Zealand. He holds a Bachelor of Commerce (Honours) from Delhi University, India, and a Master of Professional Finance and Banking from Edith Cowan University in Perth.

Currently a partner at a boutique accounting firm in East Perth, he has successfully achieved his professional qualifications and is now focused on expanding his business expertise. His goal is to further assist clients in running and growing their businesses more effectively.

Having lived in Perth for several years, Abhishek has developed a deep appreciation for Western Australia. Yet, he still enjoys exploring the region like a tourist, believing it's the best way to experience everything WA has to offer. Whether travelling across the state or discovering new spots in Perth, he loves sharing these experiences with his wife and two children.

During his time at ECU, he served as the Treasurer for the International Students Council, an experience that strengthened his commitment to supporting new migrants. As an immigrant himself, he actively assists newcomers in both personal and professional capacities, helping them navigate their new environment.

Now, as Treasurer and board member of ECCWA, Abhishek is eager to contribute his financial expertise to the organisation. In this role, he oversees financial administration, reviews reporting procedures, and advises the board on financial strategy, ensuring the organisation's sustainability and growth.

# Subcommittee Finance EOI

## FAO Member organisations and Associate Members

### Purpose of subcommittees:

The subcommittees play a valuable role in supporting the ECCWA Executive Office on advocacy, policy and capacity building in specific priority areas. Led by a nominated board member, with oversight provided by the board chair, each ECCWA sub-committee will identify opportunities and gaps, work with the CEO to support work plan delivery vis-à-vis stakeholder consultations and provide regular updates to the ECCWA board. Our objective is to collectively improve the way we connect, communicate and create an inclusive society.

### UPDATE: ECCWA BOARD SUBCOMMITTEES

Last year, ECCWA board sought direct engagement with our members and other stakeholders vis-à-vis ECCWA Board Subcommittees. We received EOIs from ECCWA member organisations and associate members for various 2024-2025 board subcommittees.

The subcommittee tasked with review of ECCWA Constitution, policies & procedures is close to successfully completing the task of constitution review. Once complete, our next objective will be to ensure that both ECCWA constitution and policy- procedure manual dovetail.

The subcommittee tasked with developing advocacy and capacity building for CaLD elderly has successfully partnered with The Peron Institute and South-West Compassionate Communities Network for a grant that now helps deliver compassionate cafés in Perth.

No.	Subcommittee	Board Lead
1.	Financial scrutiny and risk management	Abhishek Puri (Treasurer)

# Subcommittee Finance EOI

## FAO Member organisations and Associate Members

### Express Interest:

To express your interest in the sub-committee listed in Table 1, please seek nomination through your organisation or apply directly (should you be an associate member of ECCWA). Regardless of nomination by ECCWA member organisation or self, please submit the following information before CoB 6 pm on 30 March 2025, via email to [president@eccwa.org.au](mailto:president@eccwa.org.au) and [treasurer@eccwa.org.au](mailto:treasurer@eccwa.org.au)

We are seeking EOI for 2 positions. The role will be for the period of March 2025–March 2026 with a possible extension thereafter. We invite volunteers who are passionate to work for the community, have experience in Australia and preferably be aware of Australian codes such as NCC and AS/NZ standards applicable to financial and organisational risk management.

### Eligibility:

Invited members will be bound by code of conduct enshrined in ECCWA constitution and:

- Demonstrate commitment to ECCWA vision, mission and strategic plan
- Commit time to the subcommittee work
- Demonstrable work and/ volunteer experience in the subcommittee work area
- Demonstrate professionalism
- Be a recognised team player

### Key responsibilities:

As with all volunteer roles, your involvement in an ECCWA sub-committee is voluntary. The following responsibilities are generic and not exclusive of any specific responsibilities identified by the board:

- > 80% participation in subcommittee meetings and discussions
- Undertake specific responsibilities allocated or offered
- Engage and work with relevant stakeholders to support delivery of ECCWA work program
- Contribute to report and other publications relevant to the subcommittee

# Subcommittee Finance EOI

## **FAO Member organisations and Associate Members**

### **Selection Process:**

Each expression of interest application will be reviewed on an individual basis by the president and specific sub-committee lead(s). Selected members will be notified in April 2025. Your engagement is essential for building collaborations that will continue well into ECCWA's golden jubilee year. Whilst we welcome your interest, please note that ECCWA board subcommittee decision will be final and no correspondence in this regard will be entertained.

ECCWA thanks you for your interest in assisting our effort to build an inclusive, thriving and harmonious society wherein people of CaLD backgrounds play a crucial role. For further information or clarification, please contact: Dr Sadhana Bose (President) or Mr Abhishek Puri (Treasurer).

# Tamil Heritage Month

Our Community Liaison Specialist, Anbumoly, organised three events on the 11th, 18th and 25th January to honour Pongal festival, celebrated with various activities by Tamil community in WA. The main aim of these events is to bring people from all ages together, speak in the Tamil language, participate in cultural activities including making traditional snacks, cultural games in a cultural spirit, and to bond and pass down the legacy to the younger generations. Almost 200 people participated in total.

Pongal, celebrated in January during the 'Thai' month, is a significant festival that unites Tamils worldwide, marking the end of the harvest season and the beginning of a new cycle of renewal and prosperity, often regarded as Tamil New year. Rooted in agriculture and Tamil traditions, it reflects the deep connection Tamils have with nature, community, and cultural heritage, making it a non-religious celebration embraced by people of all faiths.

January is also recognised as Tamil Heritage Month, acknowledging Tamil as one of the world's oldest classical, living, and spoken languages, with a rich literary, artistic, and historical legacy spanning over 5,000 years. This designation honors the enduring contributions of Tamil civilisation, reinforcing the importance of preserving and celebrating Tamil identity, language, and traditions globally. The observance of Tamil Heritage Month in January further strengthens the significance of Pongal as a festival that embodies Tamil resilience, unity, and cultural pride across generations.





# Tamil Heritage Month





# Tamil Heritage Month



# Community

## **Building Women's Careers Program**

The Hon Andrew Giles MP, Minister for Skills and Training has announced 10 Building Women's Careers Program Stream One Partnership Projects.

Visit the [Building Women's Careers Program](#) website to read more about these exciting projects.

Learn about how they will advance structural and cultural change and improve women's access to flexible, safe and inclusive training and work opportunities in the key male-dominated industries and sectors of construction, clean energy, advanced manufacturing and digital and technology.

## **Community Heritage Grants: Supporting Local Cultural Collections**

The Community Heritage Grants (CHG) program provides vital support to community-based organisations in preserving Australia's moveable cultural heritage. These grants help local groups identify, protect, and maintain publicly accessible, nationally significant collections.

### *Who Can Benefit?*

The CHG program is designed for small, local organisations with limited resources that would benefit from professional heritage expertise. Grants of up to \$20,000 are available to assist eligible groups in a three-stage process:

1. Assessing Collections – Identifying the historical and cultural significance of collections.
2. Planning for Preservation – Evaluating collection conditions and developing a conservation strategy.
3. Implementing Conservation Measures – Supporting practical improvements such as conservation treatments, digitisation, storage solutions, and environmental controls.

Eligible applicants include non-profit and incorporated organisations, as well as select government agencies such as historical societies, regional museums, archives, public libraries, community groups, and multicultural and First Nations organisations.

### *How to Apply*

Applicants are encouraged to review the 2025 CHG Round Guidelines before submitting an application. Full details, including eligibility criteria and application forms, are available at:

[www.library.gov.au/services/grants/community-heritage-grants](http://www.library.gov.au/services/grants/community-heritage-grants)

# Community

## WACOSS Conference 2025: Innovating Together, Leaving No One Behind

The WACOSS Conference 2025 will take place from 12-14 May 2025 at the Pan Pacific Perth, bringing together community service organisations, policymakers, and sector leaders to explore innovative approaches to current challenges.


This year's theme, "Innovating Together, Leaving No One Behind," focuses on collaboration and practical solutions in the face of increasing demand for services, particularly due to the ongoing cost-of-living and housing crisis.

On Monday, 12 May, a half-day workshop presented in partnership with the Council of Aboriginal Services Western Australia (CASWA) will examine how the Priority Reforms of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap can be applied to strengthen partnerships, improve data sharing, and enhance outcomes for Aboriginal communities.

The main conference program on 13-14 May will focus on three key themes:

- Emerging Technologies: Examining their impact on the sector and opportunities to improve service delivery.
- Innovation in Service Delivery: Exploring new approaches to program design, funding, and implementation.
- Wellbeing for All: Looking at how wellbeing measurement can inform policy and investment decisions.

The conference provides an opportunity for organisations working with CaLD communities to engage in discussions on how innovation can lead to better outcomes across the sector.

 Dates: 12-14 May 2025

 Venue: Pan Pacific Perth

 Register [here](#)



📍 20 View Street, North Perth, WA 6006

☎ (08) 9227 5322

🌐 [www.eccwa.org.au](http://www.eccwa.org.au)

✉ [admin@eccwa.org.au](mailto:admin@eccwa.org.au)

✉ [boardmembers@eccwa.org.au](mailto:boardmembers@eccwa.org.au)



Ethnic Communities Council  
of Western Australia Inc



Department of  
Local Government, Sport  
and Cultural Industries



OFFICE OF  
MULTICULTURAL INTERESTS