

**Fourteenth (14) Annual General Meeting Wednesday 12 November 2020**

**Chair's Annual Report (Nov 2019-Oct 2020)**

## **Introduction**

I wish to acknowledge the traditional owners and custodians of the land we are meeting on, the Ngunnawal people. We respect their continuing culture and the unique contribution they make to the life of this city and region. We pay respects to their elders of past, present and future.

We acknowledge all the people who have come to settle in the land of Australia as their home, the rich cultures these people have brought to this country and for the contributions they make to this country. We are all proud to be Australian as we embrace and celebrate the success of Australia as a multicultural society.

It is my great pleasure to present the annual report as the CMCF Chair, to members of the Canberra Multicultural Community Forum (CMCF) Incorporated at this Fourteenth (14<sup>th</sup>) Annual General Meeting held on Thursday 12 November at the Theo Notaras Multicultural Centre.

Covid-19 outbreak around the world has posed a great challenge to the City that we live in. We respect the social distance and restriction on group gathering, as such, we welcome members that could join the AGM online.

## **Promote Multicultural Diversity and Harmony**

CMCF's vision is for a fair and harmonious Canberra community, which supports and celebrates cultural diversity. As the peak multicultural community organisation, CMCF represents over 120 ethnic community organisations and associated individual members.

The role and work of CMCF is to support the diverse multicultural communities in the ACT, while ensuring the concept of multiculturalism is represented positively to the broader Australian community at large, and to unite the communities together to stand up to build a strong force to fight against racism and discrimination.

## **Reflection of our commitments - A Challenging Year**

The year started off on a positive note, with the newly elected executive committee working together and made every effort to uphold our commitments:

- value and invest on our members to ensure our governance system and transparent processes in place.
- ensure that the ACT Multicultural community's voices is being heard and affirm our presentation as the PEAK organisation.
- being responsive and support our community, now and into the future.
- is respected as a trusted source of information and is influential in public policy developments, especially with the coping of current COVID pandemic.
- focus on advocating and building community capacity with a variety of community development programs on offer to our members.
- ensure Canberra continues to be a welcoming and supportive place, including provide support to refugees, asylum seekers, humanitarian, new migrant, and multicultural communities.

We have firm representation at the ACT Ministerial Multicultural Advisory Council and continue to put forward a strong voice and views in response to various national /local issues that are of significant interests and concern to our community.

### **Impact of Bush Fire and COVID 19**

The December 19 Bush Fire and current COVID-19 pandemic resulted with restriction and cancellation of community events and activities, and the opportunity for face to face engagement with our membership.

CMCF acknowledged Mr Chris Steel MLA, during his term as the Minister for Multicultural Affairs, for his support of the multicultural communities and in particular, the recognition of CMCF as an effective ACT Peak multicultural community organisation and responded to our concerns and the urgent need to reach out to the multicultural communities to ensure that they are kept safe from the pandemics.

CMCF approached Mental Health Services to raise concerns of the needs of multicultural communities and support required to access information and mental health services. Unfortunately, we were not successful in obtaining grant funding to support our communities. We will continue to seek opportunity to ensure that our multicultural communities voices are heard.

CMCF acknowledgement the support of ACTCOSS support throughout the pandemic by holding a joint Zoom forum with community sectors, to address hardships and issues facing the communities. As coronavirus-racism increases, ACTCOSS and CMCF support Minister's call for a national anti-racism strategy. We encouraged victims and witnesses to report racism and discrimination directly to the ACT Human Rights Commission. It is important for the community to stand up and make it clear to everyone that racism is not tolerated, and we need to educate the community about the damage and extreme hurt that racism causes.

### **2020 ACT Election**

CMCF conducted a success Zoom Election Conversation Forum, attended by 15 candidates and members of multicultural communities.

CMCF is determined to pursue with the government and the opposition to develop an inclusive community-consulted multicultural policy that listens to, understands and commits to addressing the priorities and needs of the diverse multicultural communities, as well as appropriately resources to ensure the achievable outcomes are actioned and supported.

We welcome the newly appointed Minister for Multicultural Affairs and Human Rights, Tara Cheyne MLA and the commitment of the Government to establish the Multicultural Act.

The number of candidates come from multicultural backgrounds is encouraging. From the election campaign, it has emerged with a common feeling amongst the multicultural community leaders that there is a real need to form an alliance platform with diverse communities to address issues that affects the community and to ensure our voices are heard loudly and clearly.

## **CMCF Governance and Advocacy Services to communities**

### **Working in partnership with communities**

CMCF provide support to our own community organisations with their activities and promote their events through our website and Facebook page.

We are pleased to sponsor the African Soccer tournament in support of their case to promote awareness of Domestic Violence.

We continue to support various Women organisations including IWIn, MELT, CMWF for conducting successful events.

CMCF assisted the Justice and Community Safety Directorate to find speakers for the upcoming Coroner's Court Training programs and the response has been positive with various community groups offering their support.

### **CMCF Community Development Programs**

We acknowledge the support and contribution made by Suzanne Eastwood who has kindly given her time to develop our community development programs for the benefits of our members and community. Suzanne offers her services to our members to assist with grant applications and facilitate various workshops throughout the year.

CMCF conducted successful two workshops (Face to Face and Zoom event) in partnership with CHS and HCCA on "What is a Good Death" conversation Forum in October 2020. We hope to organise further conversation forum to address issues such as Palliative care services and "End of Life" issues.

We acknowledged and grateful to receive small grant through Alicia Payne's MLA community grant project.

### **CMCF Multicultural Seniors Network – SMILE program**

The senior multicultural information learning exchange (SMILE) program is part of the CMCF Multicultural Seniors Network activities.

CMCF held a Multicultural Seniors round table in November 2019 in collaboration with the Multicultural Communities Council Illawarra (MCCI) with the view to set up regular multicultural consultation forum in the future.

CMCF will continue to establish dialogue with MCCI to support the multicultural older community 65+ requiring aged care services to access the services available.

### **Community Language and Education**

CMCF is working closely with the Bilingual Education Alliance, the ACT Community Language School and other education and community interested groups to explore means to influence the ACT Government's policies on language education.

CMCF acknowledges the work of Dr Mandy Scott for her commitment and dedication to follow up with the current independent review of ACT Government's investment in Community Languages Schools

CMCF acknowledges the tireless contribution made by Dr Mandy Scott for organising various successful events to promote children learning languages and the successful ACTBEA Taste of Language competition.

### **2XX Multicultural Voice**

The Weekly Multicultural Voice Radio program presented by CMCF with Mandy and Vesna as the regular and lead presenter is another CMCF initiative that provides opportunity for smaller community groups to promote their organisations and provided regular interviews with prominent leaders including politicians to discuss variety of current affairs and issues of interests.

### **Community Public Liability Insurance**

CMCF has established an affordable community public liability insurance policy scheme for \$20,000,000 cover renewable yearly. Over 65 organisations have joined the scheme and are benefitting from the reduced premium fees. The scheme is administered by Carol Keil and CMCF acknowledges her dedication to ensure that the renewals and new applications are processed in a timely manner.

## **ACT Policing and Crime prevention**

CMCF and ACT Policing continued to work closely together to develop strategies to connect with communities to promote the community interface between ACT Policing and the multicultural community. CMCF is working closely with the Multicultural Police Liaison Officers and the Crime Prevention team unit with various projects, targeting community safety, youth at risk and young refugees' activities programs, neighbourhood watch programs and multicultural policing volunteers' programs.

## **Relationships with Federal/Territory agencies**

As an independent peak community organisation representing the interests of the ACT Multicultural community, CMCF has been proactive and has been well represented and participated in various peak organisation consultation forums at both Federal and Territory Government levels, thus enabling us to represent our communities, influencing new policy developments, especially in the area of migration and settlement planning; aged care reforms, transport issues, housing issues and urban planning issues.

CMCF, made a submission to the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety and was invited to make a brief statement to Commissioner L Briggs at the Community Forum held in Canberra on 25 November 2019.

CMCF, made a submission in response to the Strengthening Partnerships – Commissioning for Social Impact Discussion Paper.

CMCF, provide feedbacks to the COVID Ethical framework and regularly provide feedbacks to the development of information packages for the community as part of critical friendships of OMA.

CMCF, represented and attended the Service Australia Community Forum to ensure that the community is kept abreast with the public policies and information about various community services.

## **Department of Home Affairs, Multicultural Liaison**

CMCF liaise regularly with the Multicultural Liaison Officers from the Department of Home Affairs and provide feedbacks of the current situation in the multicultural community.

CMCF provided feedbacks in response to Minister Alan Tudge's address at the National Press Club on 28 August 2020 relating to four challenges to social cohesion namely: Impact of COVID; Foreign interference; English Language; Technology and the announcement of new measures.

CMCF was invited to attend the Prime Minister / Home Affairs Community Leaders Zoom Forum with the Federal Government announcement of the changes to the support of the English Learning program.

## **ACTH Multicultural Health Reference Group**

CMCF continues a strong working relationship with the ACT Health Multicultural Policy Unit by meeting regularly and providing input into valuable policy and strategies in developing the ACT Health Care Services Framework. This included profiling various communities and providing information in their languages.

CMCF is looking forward to working with the new Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Tara Cheyne MLA and will also be looking forward to working with the Shadow Minister, Giulia Jones MLA. We acknowledged and thank Elizabeth Kikkert for her support.

## **Federation of Ethnic Community Council of Australia**

We continue to act independently with confidence and working in collaboration with The Federation of Ethnic Communities Council (FECCA), as a non-member partnership, providing inputs and participating in various consultation forums at local and national levels.

CMCF continues to assist the Federation of Ethnic Community Council of Australia (FECCA) throughout the year, providing support as ACT advocate with various national community projects, attended various consultation forums and until recently, as a member of the National CALD communities Aged Care Reference Committee, thus ensuring that there is an united voice being heard that is truly representing the ACT multicultural community at the National level. We are still hopeful that FECCA will review the legitimate representation processes to ensure the appropriate organisation such as CMCF is the ACT representative body.

### **CMCF partnership – Rotary Clubs – Octagonal Peace Pole for Lennox Gardens**

CMCF is pleased to join with Rotary Club of Canberra Burley Griffin, Rotary Club of Canberra to install the Peace Pole within the Lennox Garden. The pole will display 15 languages to demonstrate the extent and diversity of cultural groups. We look forward to having the pole in place in April 2021.

### **CMCF partnership – Regional Media Group**

CMCF is currently working on redeveloping the logo and branding. There will also be improvement to the website because of the new changes. We are also pleased to establish a working relationship with the Regional Media Group and RiotACT to “build a bridge” between multicultural communities in the area of community education, culture, business and friendship.

### **Influencing Public Policy and Decision-Making Process**

Throughout the year, CMCF responded to ACT Government invitations and attended various community consultations and focus group meetings to speak on issues affecting the multicultural community in the ACT.

### **Strengthening CMCF Strategic partnership**

CMCF continue to nurture the productive working relationship established with key representative/ Peak organisations that form part of the ACT Community:

- As an affiliated community organisation of Health Care Consumers Association, representing the multicultural community to address issues relating to health care needs and well beings of the community, especially matters affecting the heightened needs of multicultural community and participated as a health care consumer representative.
- As a member of ACTCOSS (ACT Council of Social Services), participating in various community sector consultations, representing the CALD community to identify, discuss and address social policies and community issues.
- Supporting our Multicultural Community WOMEN Forum, working closely with other likeminded community organisations to address issues affecting CALD women and identify strategies to connect with CALD women so their needs could be addressed. CCWF will also work in this area.
- Attended RASH (Refugee Asylum Seeker and Humanitarian Co-ordination Committee) meetings which address issues of concern to these groups.
- National Ethnic Disability Alliance promoting the interests of disabled people by lobbying government to ensure the needs of multicultural community accessing disability services are being met in a culturally appropriate way.
- Working closely with Council of the Ageing (COTA), supporting various projects initiated by COTA especially in relation to transport and housing issues.
- Working closely with Breast Screening ACT Management committee, to promote community awareness of breast cancer and encourage regular check-up.

- Working closely with ACT Multicultural Mental Health Network groups, promoting mental health and well-being; develop strategies to disseminate information to community related to mental health care and reducing stigma relating to mental illness.

### **ACT Multicultural Awards**

We are pleased and congratulate Yelin Hung, for receiving recommendation at the ACT Multicultural Award, in recognition of her as the Champion for promoting multiculturalism and support of the multicultural communities in the ACT.

### **Funding and resources**

CMCF, like many other organisations, rely on grants for funding. CMCF acknowledged the Government's support with the recent success in obtaining Multicultural community support and Digital grants.

### **The future**

Australia is the most ethnically diverse country in the world with 26% of Australians being born overseas and 49% of people having at least one parent born overseas. Australia has 100 religions and 300 ethnic groups in our cultural melting pot. 21.7% of people in ACT speaking a language other than English at home. Over 9000 people in the ACT is 65 years and over.

The fast-changing pace of issues facing civil society in general and the needs of the multicultural community specifically means that we need to ensure we are prepared to take on the issues that arise.

There is more work for the CMCF to find ways to work with and help vulnerable communities, including refugees and asylum seekers. There is also a need to find young leaders from our respective communities prepared to take on further roles in the multicultural community.

Preparations are in place to conduct programs in the coming months and we encourage you and your membership take the opportunity to attend these programs.

I present the report to you.



Signed

Chin K Wong

---

12 November 2020