



smecc

Rise higher.



Annual Report



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

It is my pleasure to present the president's report for 2026. From the perspective of the Board, the last 12 months has again been a time of stability and growth for SMECC. Despite further strain on our income streams, we have continued to retain and attract, passionate and highly skilled staff members and volunteers, of whom we are very grateful that they choose to work in this space, for what remains a highly worthwhile cause.

We have expanded our capacity in terms of addressing food insecurity and the cost-of-living crisis via our Social Supermarkets and "Second Time Around" opportunity shop. We have also focused on maintaining and improving our capital assets as a safeguard for the future.

Advocacy for the interests of ethnic communities, and the promotion of the principles of multiculturalism have also been feature over the last year. This is of particular importance given the rise in racism and cynical anti-migration politics. With CEO Akesa on the board of our peak body, FECCA (Federation of Ethnic Communities Councils of Australia) board and SMECC a key member of two influential regional alliances (ethnic communities and food hubs) we expect our influence at local, State and Federal level to be impactful and that the true worth of our sector recognised at all government levels. We are hoping that our advocacy and collaborative efforts will literally and figuratively, pay off in the future.

On a personal level, this is my final President's report as I step down from the role of Chairperson. Over the last 12 years, I have observed an organisation that often staggered from one problem to the next, forever reactive, and surviving day by day, transform into a more proactive, better managed, financially astute and committed group of dedicated people. Having noticed the improvements and progress we have made, I acknowledge all past staff, board members and volunteers.

It is important to bear in mind that whatever the context, SMECC has always been able to adapt, pivot where necessary, and maximise its human and capital resources to serve this community with respect and integrity – otherwise we would not have survived for so long, 47 years to date. Given that I am elected, I intend to continue as a member the SMECC board for a little while longer.

Again, I extend my sincere thanks to our staff and volunteers, whose commitment consistently goes above and beyond. Their efforts ensure that SMECC remains a vital and responsive organisation. It has been an honour and a joy to have served as President, and I look forward to contributing to the best of my abilities.

Yours sincerely,
Ian Japp
Board president



CEO'S REPORT

It is my privilege to present the CEO Report for Sunraysia Mallee Ethnic Communities Council's 47th Annual General Meeting.

Reflecting on the past year, I am reminded of both the challenges and opportunities facing multicultural communities. In an environment where racism and division can undermine community trust and cohesion, I am proud of the leadership SMECC continues to provide as the peak body for multicultural communities in the Mallee. For 47 years, we have championed inclusion, equity, and participation, contributing to stronger and more connected communities across regional Victoria.

This commitment extends beyond service delivery. Throughout the year, we continued to advocate for the needs and aspirations of Multicultural communities, ensuring regional voices are heard in conversations that shape policy, investment, and community outcomes. A significant opportunity was our contribution to the Victorian Government's Multicultural Victoria Review, led by George Lekakis AO.

While Advocacy remains critical, what continues to inspire me most is the strength, resilience, and contribution of the communities we serve. The Mallee's rich cultural diversity has been shaped by generations of people from different backgrounds and different journeys but have ultimately made this region their home. Through their skills, entrepreneurship, traditions, and determination, they have made a lasting contribution to the social, economic, and cultural fabric of our region, helping to create the vibrant, prosperous, and connected community we enjoy today.

I would also like to acknowledge our outgoing Chair for his exceptional contribution to SMECC over the past 12 years as a Board Member, including six years as Chair. His leadership, vision, and unwavering commitment to multicultural communities have been instrumental in guiding the organisation through a period of significant growth and impact. While he will conclude his term as Chair at this Annual General Meeting, I am pleased that he will continue to serve as a Board Director through 2027, allowing SMECC to continue benefiting from his experience and counsel.

Finally, I extend my sincere thanks to our Board of Management, staff, volunteers, members, funding partners, stakeholders, and community leaders. The achievements outlined throughout this report are a testament to your dedication, collaboration, and shared commitment to creating a more inclusive and harmonious community.

Sincerely,
Akesa Kei
Chief Executive Officer



TREASURER'S REPORT

It is my pleasure to present the Treasurer's Report for the financial year ending 30 June 2026. Our financial statements have again been audited by Crowe Audit Australia and have come up clean.

SMECC recorded turnover of \$1,524,004 and an operating deficit of \$266,705, compared with a deficit of \$31,916 in 2025.

During the year the funding body advised SMECC that \$81,628 of Adult and Community Education (ACFE) funding received in the 2022/23 year had been paid and not acquitted and was required to be repaid. Under Accounting Standards, funding was correctly recognised as revenue on receipt in 2023, however because we were only notified of the repayment obligation it is a requirement for the full \$81,628 to be expensed in 2026. It is a clawback of prior-year funding, not an operating cost of this year. Excluding it, the underlying deficit was \$185,077.

Revenue declined 9% to \$1,524,004, continuing the trend of the past three years. This reflects sustained pressure across the grant funding environment rather than any loss of program capability — grant income fell from \$1,229,783 to \$1,056,586. Non-government income held up well: rental income from Ramsay Court contributed \$102,147 and sundry revenue rose to \$174,335 which is pleasing and something we will continue to try to improve.

We invested \$245,337 in our assets this year, including capital works of \$214,992 on our properties, with significant improvements to Ramsay Court. This is a deliberate use of accumulated reserves. The work protects both the condition of our buildings and the rental income stream Ramsay Court reliably provides.

The balance sheet remains sound. At year end SMECC held \$561,828 in cash and \$775,033 in managed investments — \$1,336,861 in cash and readily realisable funds. Total current assets were \$1,385,526 against current liabilities of \$592,298, a current ratio of 2.34. We remain able to meet all obligations as and when they fall due.

I confirm that all Federal and State taxes have been paid, all superannuation obligations have been remitted, all staff leave provisions are current and all creditors have been paid when due.

Looking ahead, the Board's priorities are to grow non-government revenue, secure and diversify the grant base, and return SMECC to an operating surplus. The Nourish Sunraysia Social Supermarket, Robinvale Food Pantry and our ACFE programs continue to deliver real value to the community.

I wish to thank the SMECC finance and operations team, especially Maree Buckingham and Akesa Kei, for their diligence and accuracy in managing our finances. I also thank the Finance Committee and the SMECC Board for their continued support and oversight.

Yours sincerely,
John De Luca
Treasurer

STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2026

	Note	2026 \$	2025 \$
Revenue	2	1,524,004	1,671,863
Other income	3	117,240	103,679
Interest revenue calculated using the effective interest method		41,851	42,646
Administrative expenses		(258,386)	(286,631)
Depreciation	4	(105,198)	(106,632)
Finance Costs		(36,435)	(34,948)
Motor vehicle expenses		(29,340)	(31,737)
Occupancy expenses		(81,898)	(59,832)
Program Costs		(65,571)	(87,422)
Employee benefit expense		(1,286,121)	(1,232,372)
Return unspent funds		(81,628)	-
Travel expenses		(5,223)	(10,530)
Deficit before income tax expense		(266,705)	(31,916)
Income tax expense	1	-	-
Deficit after income tax expense attributable to members		(266,705)	(31,916)
Other comprehensive income			
Other comprehensive income for the year, net of tax		-	-
Total comprehensive income for the year attributable to members		(266,705)	(31,916)

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
AS AT 30 JUNE 2026

	Note	2026 \$	2025 \$
ASSETS			
CURRENT ASSETS			
Cash and cash equivalents	5	561,828	876,400
Trade and other receivables	6	17,346	34,861
Other assets	8	31,319	-
Investments and other financial assets	7	775,033	758,311
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS		1,385,526	1,669,572
NON CURRENT ASSETS			
Property, plant and equipment	9	1,997,698	1,837,920
Right-of-use assets	10	456,174	469,299
TOTAL NON CURRENT ASSETS		2,453,872	2,307,219
TOTAL ASSETS		3,839,398	3,976,791
LIABILITIES			
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Trade and other payables	11	121,702	79,079
Employee benefits	13	137,406	116,650
Lease liabilities	14	12,029	11,279
Contract liabilities	15	321,161	254,987
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES		592,298	461,995
NON CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Borrowings	12	3,206	1,944
Employee benefits	13	26,540	16,764
Lease liabilities	14	518,844	530,873
TOTAL NON CURRENT LIABILITIES		548,590	549,581
TOTAL LIABILITIES		1,140,888	1,011,576
NET ASSETS		2,698,510	2,965,215
EQUITY			
Retained earnings		2,698,510	2,965,215
TOTAL EQUITY		2,698,510	2,965,215

Board of Management

2025–26



Ian Japp
President (Chair)



Charles Albanese
Vice President



Claire Kelly
Board Secretary



John Deluca
Treasurer



Bruce Myers
General Board member



Jane Robinson
General Board member



Monica Trehan
General Board member

The SMECC Board of Management comprises diverse, highly qualified professionals and community leaders from the Sunraysia area, representing the rich cultural fabric of the Northern Mallee Region. Their dedicated governance ensures strategic direction, financial accountability, and sustained advocacy for ethnic communities, fostering empowerment and positive change.

SMECC Staff

Executive Management



Akesa Kei
(Kingdom of Tonga)



Maree Buckingham
(Australia)



Patricia Fotheringham
(Australia)



Ji Hyon (Annie) Kwon
(Korea)



David Nteziryayo
(Democratic Republic of Congo)

Emergency Food relief



Mitchell Rayson
(Australia)



Ruwacy Al dakhil
(Iraq)



Detelina Arnold
(Bulgaria)



Stephanie Smaller
(New Zealand)



Cindy Arum
(Indonesia)

Adult Education

Community Support



Juvelina Guterres
(Timor Leste)



Kunnika Powell
(Thailand)



Kewal Prajapat
(India)



Phung (Ellina) Bui
(Vietnam)



Angela Biak Nei Zing
(Myanmar)

Strength in diversity: Language, Culture and Lived Experience

Our team's diversity is one of SMECC's greatest strengths. Together, our multilingual staff bring a wealth of professional expertise, cultural knowledge and lived experience. With the ability to communicate in 21 languages, our team helps bridge cultural and language barriers, build trust and create meaningful connections with the diverse communities we serve.

Volunteering at SMECC



**Second-Time-Around
Volunteers**

**Social
Supermarket
Volunteers**

**SMECC
Learning
Volunteers**

**Robinvale
Convo Cafe
Volunteers**

**Multicultural
Playgroup
Volunteers**

**Work
placement
and school
students**

**Total
7058
Volunteer
Hours**



Our volunteers are an invaluable part of the SMECC community, with more than 30 volunteers contributing their time, expertise, and enthusiasm across our various programs and services. Their dedication enhances our services, helping us create welcoming environments, deliver settlement support, and foster connections across cultures. Through our collective efforts, our community benefits from stronger relationships, greater inclusion, and lasting positive impact.



Multicultural Advisory Committee (MAC)

The Multicultural Advisory Committee (MAC) plays an important role in ensuring the voices of multicultural communities are heard and reflected in local decision-making. MAC works closely with the Sunraysia Mallee Ethnic Communities Council (SMECC) to identify emerging community needs, barriers to services, and opportunities to strengthen inclusion and participation. Through regular consultation, community feedback and collaboration with SMECC, the committee helps inform programs, services and initiatives that support multicultural communities across the region. This partnership ensures that local responses are culturally informed, community-led and responsive to the diverse experiences of people from multicultural backgrounds.



Viliani Vea
(Tongan Community)



Benedict Baraka
(Congolesse Community)



Flora Walter
(Malaysian Community)



Joselyne Majambere
(Buriundian Community)



**Worachat (Tar)
Tantibankool**
(Thai Community)



Thi Minh trang Ngo (Jessica)
(Vietnam Community)



Martin Bawicung
(Myanmar Community)



Juvelina Guterres
(Timor-Leste Community)



Jacob Jo
(Korean Community)



Rose Rogers
(Filipino Community)



Shahnaz Ullah
(Afghanistan Community)



Chi Tiang
(Chinese Community)



Sopheie
(Cambodia Community)



Sorna Eskandari
(Iran Community)



Kennedy Roga
(Solomon Islands)



Yashiko Gardener
(Japan Community)



Masi Naquto
(Fijian Community)

SMECC Representatives

Juvelina Guterres (MAC Coordinator)
Akesa Kei (Chair)



Sandhu Baljinder
(Indian Community)

Community Sponsorship 2026 recipients



Greek Elderly Citizens Club



Tongan U15 & 18 Netball Teams



Sunraysia Indian Association
Diwali Festival of lights



PO'Ako Homework Club Awards



Community



Engagement

Our Programs

Learning, Settlement and Engagement

Through our programs and services, SMECC supports individuals and families to navigate their settlement journey, build independence and actively participate in the community. Through Learning, Settlement Engagement and Transition Support (SETS), Multicultural Access Pathways and Driving Mentoring, we provide practical guidance, tailored support and opportunities to develop skills, access services and build meaningful connections. Our programs help strengthen confidence, improve access to opportunities and support successful settlement, community participation and a strong sense of belonging.



and Services

**Over 600
Individuals
Supported**

**More than 20
Cultural
Backgrounds**

**30 Different
Workshops
Facilitated**





Quality, Low priced Secondhand Clothing & Wares

SMECC Twilight Market

Our Twilight Market celebrated the achievements of participants in SMECC's Micro Business Class, providing students with a real-world opportunity to showcase their products, connect with the community and gain confidence in their entrepreneurial skills. The event brought the community together with 11 local market stall holders, 3 local food vans and over 250 community attendees, alongside 11 models taking part in our Second Time Around fashion parade. It was a vibrant celebration of creativity, learning, local enterprise and community connection.



Food Security – Nourish Sunraysia Social Supermarket

Through Nourish Sunraysia, SMECC works with local organisations, food donors and community partners to improve food security and ensure people have access to essential food support. In June 2026, Nourish Sunraysia Social Supermarket celebrated its first birthday, marking a year of making a meaningful difference in the community. During the year, the program supported 25 services, distributed 5,773 food relief vouchers and worked with 45 local food donors, strengthening the local food relief network and helping ensure surplus food reaches people who need it. In June 2026, SMECC also expanded its food security response with the opening of the Robinvale Community Pantry, extending access to emergency food relief for individuals and families in the Robinvale community.



“Helped by being able to provide food for the family in hard times where there isn't money left for these essentials after housing.”

**Opened
June 2026**

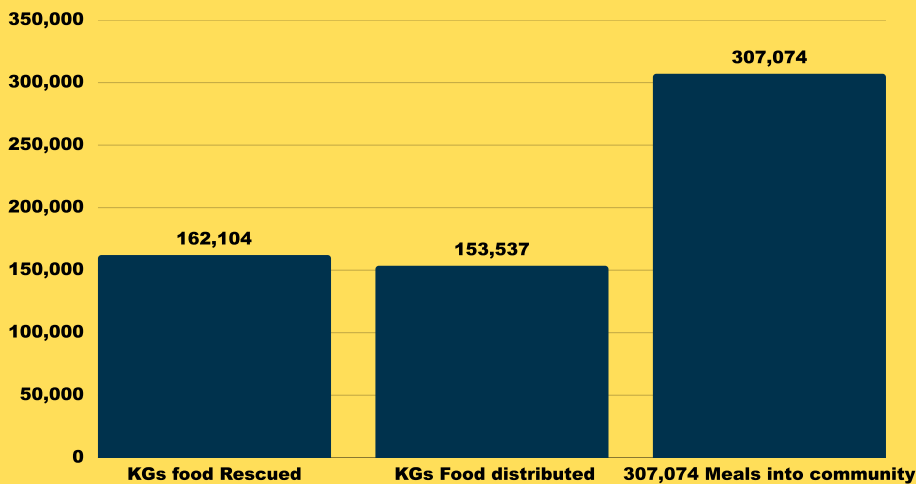
**3,728
Volunteer
Hours**

**\$1,151,527
Value
of food
distributed**

“I'm currently unable to access food very easily and this has been a massive relief as i'm experiencing homelessness”

Our impact and reach for 2025-26

● 2026-27



“It means I didnt have to choose between medication or food for my children”

“It helped ease the stress and made sure we had food when things were tough.”

“Without this affordable option available out family would often be left without.”

“Thank you from a struggling pensioner god bless”



Advocacy Highlights 2026

We proudly continue to represent and promote community voice through participation in key forums, conferences and sector networks, ensuring the experiences and priorities of multicultural communities across the Mallee are represented at local, state and national levels. This included

- Federation of Ethnic Communities Council CEOs Network and National Multicultural Health & Wellbeing Conference
- Settlement Council of Australia - National Settlement Conference 2025
- Consultations and Submissions to Victoria's Multicultural Review
- Women Deliver Conference
- The Refugee Communities Association of Australia Conference
- Participating in the Regional Food Security Alliance Round Table
- Parliamentary Engagement with the Minister for Volunteers and Carers (Acknowledging volunteers)
- Victorian Electoral Commission Forum
- Supporting the inaugural General Meeting and formal adoption of the Mildura Korean Community constitution





Volunteers wanted at SMECC

Volunteers wanted at SMECC. The SMECC is looking for volunteers to help with its various programs. If you are interested, please contact the SMECC office.

Support store praised

Support store praised. The SMECC's support store has been praised for its excellent service and the quality of its products. It is a great place to shop for your community.

Play day



SUNDAY VIGIL FOR BONDI VICTIMS

SUNDAY VIGIL FOR BONDI VICTIMS. A vigil will be held on Sunday to remember the victims of the Bondi attack. The vigil will be held at the Bondi Community Center.

Play day at SMECC

Play day at SMECC. A play day was held at the SMECC on Saturday. The day was filled with fun activities for the children and their families.

Social Supermarket

Social Supermarket. The Social Supermarket is a new initiative that aims to provide fresh food and support to the community. It is a great place to shop for your community.

Social supermarket benefits affirmed

Social supermarket benefits affirmed. The Social Supermarket has been praised for its role in providing fresh food and support to the community. It is a great place to shop for your community.

Support store praised

Support store praised. The SMECC's support store has been praised for its excellent service and the quality of its products. It is a great place to shop for your community.

Play day



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Fashion, food & fun at SMECC

Fashion, food & fun at SMECC. The SMECC is hosting a fashion, food, and fun event. The event will be held at the SMECC office.

Support store praised

Support store praised. The SMECC's support store has been praised for its excellent service and the quality of its products. It is a great place to shop for your community.

Play day



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MINUTES

Special Resolutions Meeting Sep 3rd 2025

Special Resolution Meeting – Constitution Changes

On 3 September 2025, members unanimously passed a Special Resolution to adopt an updated Constitution, marking the first comprehensive review since the Constitution was last updated in 2012.

The Board dedicated considerable time and effort to reviewing and modernising the Constitution to ensure it continues to meet the evolving needs of SMECC and its members. The amendments include updated language, improved clarity and consistency, strengthened governance provisions, enhanced member benefits and participation, and introduced provisions to support contemporary governance practices, including the use of digital technologies and electronic communications.

The updated Constitution provides a modern governance framework that reflects current legislative requirements and governance best practice, while positioning SMECC to continue serving its members and the broader community effectively into the future.

CONFIRMED MINUTES SPECIAL RESOLUTION MEETING-CONSTITUTION CHANGES

At the Combined Finance and BOM Sep 17th 2025 on 17 Sept 2025 these minutes were confirmed with the following changes:

Remove Benedict Baraka from member section to Guest

Name: Sunraysia Mallee Ethnic Communities Council

Date: Wednesday, 3 September 2025

Time: 4:00 pm to 4:15 pm (AEST)

Location: Default Location, 107-111 Twelfth Street, Mildura VIC, Australia

Board Members: Ian Japp (Chair), Bruce Myers, Charles Albanese, Claire Kelly, Jane Robinson, John De Luca

Attendees: Akesa Kei, Maree Buckingham

Apologies: Chris Zhong

Guests:

Members present:

Mele Lucy Taholo, Juvelina Guterres, Benedict Baraka, Ian Japp, John

De Luca, Maree Buckingham, Akesa Kei, Claire Kelly, Jane Robinson, Charles Albanese, Bruce Myers (Online),

Non Members present:

Jackson Mugenzi

Notes: Member Apologies:

Nina Rashidah, Paul Clarke, Dong Lian Thlang Lian, Joselyne Ntahdmukie, Kazem Salehiabpardeh, Tri State Wontoks, Lea Dius,

Ludy Lowe, Maria Tha Cer, Marth Janro Ebor, Michael Mack, Patricia

D'Aranjo, Roqia Ahmadi, Con Demis, Voula Kanelopoulos, Peter Hartman, Sisilia Puku, Brigitte Tornatora, Qamar

Bakhyary, Amy Klaguthii Kamanja, Calvin Henry, Stephanie Smaller Thomson, Anadil Nustrat, Rochelle Challen, Nat Mouvet, Catherina Malanjim, Rosli par Chin, Junalyn Ngaseo-Cordillerans In Sunraysia Incorporated, Girlie Ban-eg

1. Opening Meeting

1.1 Acknowledement of country

2. Special Resolution Item

2.1 Questions raised by members concerning changes to constitution

IJ explained the changes as outlined in the notice of intention to update constitution and special resolution meeting notification sent to members via email on 12/8/2025.

IJ called for discussion on the changes. No members raised any questions.

2.2 Special Resolution

2.3 Voting on Resolution

Approved by show of hands

Mele Lucy Taholo, Juvelina Guterres, Benedict Baraka, Ian Japp, John DeLuca, Maree Buckingham, Akesa Kei, Claire Kelly, Jane Robinson, Charles Albanese, Bruce Myers via Teams online

Decision Date: 3 Sept 2025

Mover: Ian Japp

Outcome: Approved

Voting on Resolution

Adopt draft constitution as presented.

11 Supported:

0 Opposed:

0 Abstained:

Decision Date: 3 Sept 2025

Mover: Ian Japp

Outcome: Approved

3. Close Meeting

3.1 Close the meeting

MINUTES

AGM 22ND OCT 2025

Sunraysia Mallee Ethnic Communities Council

Date: Wednesday, 22 October 2025

Time: 5:00 pm to 6:30 pm (AEDT)

Location: Default Location, 107-111 Twelfth Street, Mildura VIC, Australia

Board Members: Ian Japp (Chair), Bruce Myers (Via Teams), Charles Albanese, Claire Kelly, Jane Robinson

Attendees: Akesa Kei, Maree Buckingham

Apologies: John De Luca

Guests: Non members: Mayor Helen Healy, Deputy Mayor Ali Cupper, Yahya, Abida Elahi, David Nteziryayo, Lynette Rattray, Susan Ianyon, Melanie Payen, Jannet Stolinski, Gulsum Qasem, Wanpen Prakonguit, Jenjira Chupuakpong, Allison Parker, Mitchell Rayson, Ruwacy Al-Dakhil, Werner Doctor, Girlidie Doctor, Dolly (Fillipino Community), Sue Hermans, Diane Butler, Bonny Dietrich, Mark Jenkins (MRCC), Belinda Clarke, Zia Ibrahim (MRCC-Afghan Community), Villiami Vea, Walaa Sabri (Via Teams)

Members: Joselyne Ntahdmukie (Burundian Community member) Michael Mack, Stephanie Smaller, Mele Taholo (Lucy), Kunnika Powell, Juvelina Guterres, Detelina Arnold, Wei Wei Chen, Hanifa Khudarahm, Flora Walters (Malaysian Community)

1. Opening Meeting

1.1 Confirm Minutes of 2024 AGM

AGM 23rd Oct 2024 23 Oct 2024, the minutes were confirmed as presented.

Decision Date: 22 Oct 2025

Outcome: Approved

1.2 Confirmation of Quorum

16 members present

Decision Date: 22 Oct 2025

Outcome: Approved

Minutes : AGM 2025 Oct 22nd - 22 Oct 2025

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2. Welcome & Acknowledgment of Country

2.1 Welcome to AGM

Presented by IJ

2.2 Acknowledgment of Country

Presented by IJ

3. Management Reports

3.1 Presidents Report 2025

IJ summarised attached report

Presidents report confirmed by flying minute on board pro 17/11/2025

Decision Date: 17 Nov 2025

Outcome: Approved

3.2 CEO Report 2025

AK summarised attached report

CEO report confirmed by flying minute on board pro 17/11/2025

Decision Date: 17 Nov 2025

Outcome: Approved

3.3 Treasurers Report 2025

IJ summarised attached report in JD absence

Treasurer report confirmed by flying minute on board pro 17/11/2025

Decision Date: 17 Nov 2025

Outcome: Approved

3.4 Annual Report 2024-2025

Financials and annual report confirmed by flying minute on board pro 17/11/2025

Decision Date: 22 Oct 2025

Outcome: Approved

4. Announcement of Board of Management 2024-25

4.1 BOM 2025-2026

BOM for 2025-26

Nominations

Ian Japp-Chair person

General Board members

Claire Kelly

Jane Robinson

Charles Albanese

John De Luca

Non nomination members

Bruce Myers

Decision Date: 22 Oct 2025

Outcome: Approved

4.2 Announcement of 2026 AGM Date

Proposed date: October 28th 2026

5. Volunteer of the year 2025

5.1 Volunteer of the year 2025

Allison Parker-Food Hub

Girlidie Doctor- Food hub

Wanpen Prakonguit - Food Hub and playgroup

6. Special Resolutions

7. Close Meeting

7.1 Close the meeting



Mildura Rural City Council



SUPPORTED BY



Commonwealth Bank



MSAU MDVS



Sunraysia Mallee Ethnic Communities Council Inc
107-111 Twelfth St Mildura Vic 3500
P: (03) 5022 1006
www.smecc.org.au



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