

Strategic Plan 2021-2025

Our Community: Our Work

COMMUNITY We are an integral part of the community and the community is our work	SECULAR We embrace all people irrespective of religious or spiritual beliefs	ADVOCATING We are advocates for marginalised and vulnerable communities and speak truth to power without fear or favour	SOCIAL JUSTICE We are driven by the belief that social justice is the foundation of community progress	ANTI-RACISM We counter the stigmatisation of the community in media and in the public sphere and work to protect laws against racial vilification	RESPECT We promote respect in all aspects of our work – respect for people, beliefs, culture, faith, land and the environment	RIGHTS We fundamentally believe in all aspects of human rights and work towards ensuring the expression and protection of those rights for marginalised and vulnerable groups
UNIFYING We celebrate and respect difference, providing unified representation for a diverse community	REPRESENTATIVE We represent the diverse voices of Arab Australians and promote their contribution, perspective, needs and concerns	COURAGEOUS We show courage in the face of injustice and speak out within and on behalf of the community even when issues are controversial	PROGRESSIVE We are progressive and generate new conversations, bridging cultural barriers to spark new ideas and influence policy	EQUITY We consistently work towards equity, giving vulnerable people what they need to achieve quality of life		EQUALITY We deeply believe in human equality and reject all forms of discrimination against people on any grounds including but not limited to race, age, gender, sexuality, ability or religion
DIVERSITY We embrace diversity of culture, ethnicity, religion, ability, sexuality, gender, age, opinions and ideas	BELONGING We create the space for Arabic speaking background communities to feel they belong, are valued and have the capacity to contribute to society	INCLUSIVE We practise inclusiveness with a commitment to developing solutions and building engagement, treating all people equally	AUTHENTIC We are genuine in our work with the community and represent Arab Australians authentically and truthfully	COLLABORATIVE We collaborate with other organisations and communities campaigning on issues, delivering on programs and encouraging greater understanding across divides		ADAPTING We adapt to constantly changing environments, harnessing the power of change as a positive force for progress
LEADING We exercise leadership for positive social change, engaging with complex issues and leading by example on service delivery and community advocacy	PIONEERING We bring a fresh approach to issues, pioneering new and innovative programs and services to address emerging community needs		CHAMPIONING We champion the issues which will lead to a more open and just society	INTEGRATING We see each person as a valuable member of society and support migrants and refugees in their resettlement	RESILIENCE We build community cohesion and resilience to withstand criticism and attacks, and promote reconciliation	AGILE We are strategic and at the same time agile in our response to emerging issues and crises
SERVING We understand the culture and the community we serve, addressing present and emerging needs and making a positive difference to the lives of the vulnerable and marginalised	PARTNERSHIPS We build partnerships based on respect and shared learning and pursue professional and cultural relationships to bring communities together		CELEBRATING We celebrate culture and acknowledge the heritage and contribution of Arab Australians to the rich tapestry of multiculturalism	VISIONARY We are laying the foundations for future generations to engage and continue building community	ETHICAL We are ethical in our dealings with clients, service providers, government and other stakeholders	KNOWLEDGE We are a centre of knowledge, contributing to greater understanding of community issues through rigorous research and evidence-based information
DELIVERING We identify gaps and emerging needs, delivering a broad range of services and programs to people of diverse ages and backgrounds	INNOVATIVE We provide unique perspectives and actively develop new approaches and relationships to address emerging challenges	ACCESSIBLE We consistently strive to make our services accessible to all, regardless of social or economic circumstance	ENHANCING CAPACITY We enhance the existing capacity of people in the community, working with services, volunteers, students and emerging professionals	FUTURIST We are committed to acting in the present to create a positive legacy for the future	ACCOUNTABLE We are professional and our management systems are transparent and good governance is part and parcel of the culture of our organisation	STANDARD SETTING We are professional in all our endeavours, expecting and maintaining the highest standards of service to the community within and beyond our organisation

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Background

Arab Council Australia (Council) is a secular community-based organisation. Founded in 1979 as the Arabic Welfare Workers Interagency, it became a Council in 1988 and was known as Australian Arabic Welfare Council. In November 2004, the latest iteration was adopted.

Council represents the interests of Australians from twenty-two Arab countries, with a membership that reflects this diversity and also includes people of non-Arabic speaking backgrounds. We work to bring about positive social change and to improve the lives of the marginalised and the most vulnerable people in the community.

Over Council's 40-year history and with the support from community, business and government, we have and continue to deliver a broad range of services in welfare, social support, education and cultural activities to the Arab and non-Arab Australian communities. We have remained steadfast to working inclusively across diverse communities and sectors.

Council has initiated and engaged with numerous projects that have established strong and sustainable collaborations across sectors as part of a commitment to enhance services to the community.

Council promotes solutions through consultations, research, education and partnerships. We have built trust and deep engagement around the common purpose of keeping community at the centre of our work. Council is privileged to have become a strong and leading voice, building capacity and advocating on issues relevant to the lives and well-being of Australians.



We acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we live and work and pay our respect to elders, past, present and those emerging. We acknowledge that this land was and always will be Aboriginal land.



Message from the Executive

Our world continues to challenge us. From a rapidly changing climate, escalating conflicts and increased divisions to the first pandemic in more than a hundred years; all of which have caused displacement and economic hardship to millions here and globally. As for Arab Australians, the experience of racism and socio-economic disadvantage continue to be substantial barriers to participating fully in social, economic and political life.

But even with this reality, we continue to be hopeful.

As a Council with more than forty years of service to the community, we are inspired by the many individuals and organisations we work with. We are inspired by the indefatigable efforts of those advocating for human rights. We are inspired by the resilience and tenacity of the people we meet every day who despite great adversity are working to secure a better future for themselves and their families.

We are pleased to present Council's strategic plan for 2021-2025. We are also pleased to have

our strategic goals aligned with nine of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG):

- SDG 1: No poverty
- SDG 2: Zero Hunger
- SDG 3: Good Health and Wellbeing
- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 5: Gender Equality
- SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth
- SDG 9: Industry Innovation and Infrastructure
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities
- SDG 17: Partnerships

And as we work on implementing our strategic directions over the next five years:

- We want to continue to be the hub of support for families, young people, children, older people, the marginalised and vulnerable members of our community.
- We want to continue to work with our members and partners.
- We want to continue innovating and exploring opportunities to build a fair and just future as we lead dialogues for and with our community.

Our Vision

A community that participates socially, economically and politically and where reciprocal and respectful relationships continue to develop between Arab-Australians and the wider community.

A socially inclusive community in which people enjoy a sustainable quality of life and express pride in both their Arab heritage and Australian citizenship.

A future where the diverse Arab Australian community is respected, valued and celebrated and its organisations are strong and collaborate both to achieve common goals and for the greater good of Australian society as a whole.

Our Purpose

We are a peak secular organisation proactively promoting social inclusion and diversity, confronting discrimination, inequality and racism.

We are committed to improving the lives of the marginalised and the most vulnerable in the community and amplifying their voice on issues that impact them.

We deliver culturally and linguistically appropriate social services to address isolation, inequity, exclusion, poverty and hardship.



Our Values

Our values are the fundamental beliefs of our organisation. They define who we are. They influence the way we work with each other and the way we serve and engage with our communities. Our values are underpinned by the **FAIR** principles and guide everything we do and strive to achieve.

FAIR

FREEDOM, RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES – People are free to participate fully in the social, economic and political life of society. They have the right to dignity, respect, privacy and confidentiality; to make their own life choices and to participate in decisions that affect their lives. Along with rights come responsibilities to respect the rights of other peoples and society as a whole.

ACCESS AND EQUITY – People have the right to live free from discrimination and to fair and equal access and opportunity to services, education and employment.

INCLUSION – Inclusion is the foundation of a healthy society that respects, values and celebrates the diverse and unique attributes, characteristics and perspectives that make individuals who they are regardless of race, culture, ability, gender, colour, sexual orientation, income, language and religion. We also believe that bringing diverse individuals together allows us collectively and more effectively to address the issues that face our communities.

RESPECT and INTEGRITY – We believe in building mutual respect, personal relationships and understanding between communities and demonstrating the highest standards of integrity.

Our Strategic Goals

Goal 1: Wellbeing

Promote well-functioning, healthy, productive, caring, and safe individuals, families and communities.

Goal 2: Inclusion and Social Justice

Promote inclusion and social justice, access and equality for all.

Goal 3: Poverty Relief

Alleviate poverty and promote greater equity for those in need.

Goal 4: Capacity Building

Build active, productive and cohesive communities and increase community skill and capacity.

Goal 5: Advocacy

Advocate on issues affecting the community and promote community interests.

Goal 6: Sustainability

Build a strong, representative and sustainable organisation.



Goal 1: Wellbeing

Promote well-functioning, healthy, productive, caring, and safe individuals, families and communities.

Strategic focus

- 1.1** Strengthen Council focus on domestic and family violence and support women and children to have safe and healthy lives.
- 1.2** Expand additional outreach services through new partnerships and locations.
- 1.3** Continue to explore an expanded role for Council in ageing and disability services and mental health.
- 1.4** Expand the capacity of Council services to cater for newly arrived refugees and migrants.
- 1.5** Help the community – in particular the aged - with their health, accommodation and social needs to live independently with dignity and respect.
- 1.6** Work with families to ensure their children are safe and protected from abuse and neglect.
- 1.7** Promote healthy communities through health education programs in partnership with health services.

Goal 2: Inclusion and Social Justice

Promote inclusion and social justice, access and equality for all.

Strategic focus

- 2.1** Promote the social and economic participation of young people and offer them opportunities to engage in civil society.
- 2.2** Expand the capacity of Council to support young people who experience difficulties in accessing and participating in formal learning and guiding them through educational pathways.
- 2.3** Promote the fair and equal treatment of Arab Australians at work by engaging with trade unions and relevant government organisations so to provide access to effective support and representation.
- 2.4** Assist newly arrived refugees, humanitarian entrants and migrants with their settlement needs and promote their social and economic participation in society.
- 2.5** Combat racism and discrimination.
- 2.6** Promote greater equality for all including women, LGBTIQ and marginalised people in the community.

Goal 3: Poverty Relief

Alleviate poverty and promote greater equity for those in need.

Strategic focus

- 3.1** Expand, diversify and provide emergency relief assistance to individuals and families in crisis.
- 3.2** Raise awareness about poverty and disadvantage within the Arab-speaking community.
- 3.3** Provide support to individuals and families experiencing hardship.
- 3.4** Support problem gamblers to overcome their addiction and provide financial counselling.
- 3.5** Continue to connect unemployed people to employment and training services.
- 3.6** Develop and implement projects and services that address inequity and hardship.

Goal 4: Capacity Building

Build active, productive and cohesive communities and increase community skill and capacity.

Strategic focus

- 4.1** Strengthen connections between Arab organisations.
- 4.2** Strengthen Council's representation of Arab organisations and communities.
- 4.3** Engage with and build the capacity of emerging and smaller Arab organisations and groups as needed.
- 4.4** Engage members and partners in developing innovative ideas to lead in partnership with Council.
- 4.5** Engage with the business community to promote social responsibility and explore social enterprise opportunities.
- 4.6** Strengthen the Arabic Workers Network and build capacity of its members.
- 4.7** Create opportunities for volunteers and students to develop new skills, gain more experience and contribute positively to the benefit of the community.
- 4.8** Run community building events, new projects and educational activities that address identified needs in the community.
- 4.9** Promote respect for diversity in Australian communities and greater awareness and understanding of Arab cultures.
- 4.10** Act as a resource and consultative body on issues relating to Arabic-speaking communities.

Goal 5: Advocacy

Advocate on issues affecting the community and promote community interests.

Strategic focus

- 5.1** Encourage the engagement of individuals and community organisations in the process of lobbying and advocacy.
- 5.2** Consult members on priority issues for the community and Council.
- 5.3** Strengthen the reach of Council's social media communication.
- 5.4** Take a public stand (including through the media) on issues affecting the community.
- 5.5** Engage young people in Council and on community issues.
- 5.6** Encourage and commission research projects of relevance to the community.
- 5.7** Act as an advocacy body on issues affecting the Arab Australian community.
- 5.8** Hold events and activities to promote community interests.

Goal 6: Sustainability

Build a strong, representative and sustainable organisation.

Strategic focus

- 6.1** Identify and test new funding models such as crowd and philanthropic funding.
- 6.2** Collaborate and establish funding consortia with other organisations.
- 6.3** Develop a consultancy arm of Council to deliver advisory and training services including translation service and cross-cultural training.
- 6.4** Increase and continue to diversify Council membership.
- 6.5** Implement equal employment opportunity and workplace health and safety practices.
- 6.6** Support and develop Council's staff.
- 6.7** Identify and manage organisational risks and challenges including those presented by the current pandemic and any future outbreak.
- 6.8** Operate a healthy governance structure.
- 6.9** Comply with funding agreements and quality standards.
- 6.10** Promote ethical practice throughout Council.

Services for Families and Children

- Early intervention and prevention
- Case work, referral and home visits
- Parenting support and information
- Community education
- Information sessions, workshops and training
- Children activities including reading and play groups and vacation

Services for Youth

- Social support
- Information sessions, workshops and training
- Leadership program
- Intern Program

Services for Women

- Women support group
- Safety education program
- Health and fitness program
- Domestic violence program

Services for Seniors and Carers

- One to one and group support
- Social groups
- Outings
- Health and fitness
- Educational sessions

Other specialised services

- Gambling help counselling
- Financial counselling
- Settlement services including case work, referral and advocacy
- Emergency relief and material assistance
- Disability Support Coordination Services

Community programs and initiatives

- Community building and development projects
- Collaboration and social inclusion projects
- Coordination and capacity building
- Research projects
- Campaigns on issues of relevance
- Cross cultural training and seminars
- Workshops and training on relevant topics
- Arabic Workers Network
- Translation service
- Volunteer program



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