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ANNUAL REPORT 2020 –2021

Re: Summary of Activities of the Estonian Cultural Foundation in Australia (ECFA) 2020 – 2021

The Estonian Cultural Foundation in Australia is pleased to provide a summary of events and activities undertaken during the 2020-2021 Financial Year.

Following the change of name from the Estonian Relief Committee (ERC) to its now adopted name (ECFA), it was agreed that the old ERC Ltd Constitution should be updated to reflect recent changes to its corporate state and reflect more closely its current operating mode. This last year has seen the Board reviewing the Constitution and corporate aims. The process is nearly complete, and we hope to put the new Constitution to our members soon.

During the course of the previous year, it was also decided to reassess the Company's investment strategy. Given the low rates of return from existing term deposits with banks, it was decided to seek the assistance of a financial planner to review and rationalize our existing cash assets. Accordingly, the services of Common Cents Financial Services Pty Ltd (CCFS) were engaged to advise the ECFA on an appropriate investment strategy going forward.

As a result of this strategy, and with the assistance of CCFS, the ECFA has invested its liquid assets in a range of funds that will deliver returns in the range of 4% to 12% per annum. The purpose of this strategy was to increase ECFA's annual income significantly from existing levels, enabling it to fund a greater range of individuals and organisations that promote Estonian culture in Australia.

The Estonian Cultural Foundation in Australia (ECFA) uses its funds every year to support various groups or projects which aim to further Estonian culture and language across Australia, and bring together people with Estonian heritage or interests. This includes any activities held anywhere in Australia, and we look at these as partnerships where we support these activities. Donations or bequests are most welcome, to keep on supporting Estonian culture and heritage across Australia.

In July 2021, the ECFA Board was pleased to announce a number of funding awards to promote Estonian culture in Australia. A total of \$16,550 was awarded and included the following organisations and individuals:

Eesti Päevad - Melbourne, Easter 2022 ~ awarded \$5,000

Eesti Päevad is a festival held every 2-3 years in a different location in Australia. This festival brings together many hundreds of Estonians, to enjoy Estonian culture. Activities include handicraft displays, folk-dancing and choir concerts, sports activities, and many other events over the four days of the festival. Groups from Eesti come to perform at previous Eesti Päevad Festivals and it is hoped to have one Eesti music group for 2022, depending on the covid situation.

The ECFA sees the Eesti Päevad as an important regular event for many Estonians from across Australia to come together to celebrate their culture, and to meet other Estonians, and aims to continue supporting these events.

For this Festival, one full day will be spent at Kilmore, about an hour north of Melbourne. This will have a traditional bonfire, traditional fun and games and music, and even sauna. Eesti Päevad Festival 2022 will be official opened at Kilmore forest.

The Foundation decided to sponsor the Festival with \$2,000 towards the Festival album, which will be a collector's item; and \$3,000 to be the sponsor of the Kilmore event.

Sörve Children's Camp ~ awarded \$6,000

To directly assist the National Estonian Summer Camp continue and strengthen the bonds within the Australian-Estonian community. This will be achieved through camp activities including:

- Australian-Estonian language teachers involved in the kindergarten groups around Australia
- Music including singing to show an insight to the Estonian Song Festivals
- Dancing to showcase and promote participation in the Estonian Dance groups in Australia
- Participation in creation of traditional Estonian Art and Craft.
- Providing our young adults with opportunities to develop youth leadership and mentoring skills that will flow on to a wider Australian-Estonian community or even Estonian communities abroad.

Hans Ots Annual Award ~ awarded \$4000

Hans Ots bequeathed a substantial amount in his will to the Cultural Foundation (ECFA). The ECFA has allocated an annual award from this to support youth from interstate mainly and from outside of Sydney to attend Sörve Camp.

Adelaide Eesti Selts – Estonian Choir “Hapu Koor” ~ awarded \$1000

Hapu Koor was formed in 2010 to perform at Eesti Päevad. The original group of 15 men and women has grown to 22 members. While the group is essentially an adult group, it includes and encourages young Estonians. The youngest member is 12 years old. The group consists of fluent Estonian speakers, minimal Estonian speakers and has recently welcomed young Estonians adults who have settled in Adelaide.

The choir lead is Ms Kadri Auväärt who professionally works as a school leader in a South Australian government school. Kadri is a Certificate 3 Music Industry Trainer. On 28 February 2021 Kadri was presented with an Aukiri for in excess of 20 years of service and leadership of “Hapu Koor”, involvement in the Estonian Folk Dancing Group and broader community service. Hapu Koor has a broader leadership group that consists of Kai Holt, Tina Fontaine and Peter Bailiht.

Hapu Koor sings and performs traditional songs and in particular, with the arrival of young Estonians now living in Adelaide, is exploring contemporary and popular Estonian music. Hapu Koor is clearly a choir for both fun and performance.

Some members also participate in Kooskõlas, the Australian Estonian Choir. They self-fund travel and accommodation.

Hapu Koor plans to make new traditional choir shirts produced by local Estonian seamstresses with traditional woven belts (produced by the weaver’s group) enhancing their uniform.

Virtualised folk dancing group ~ awarded \$550

Virtualised folk dancers are based in Sydney and regularly showcase Estonian culture at various events through both dance and the wearing of national costumes.

After years of wearing their national costumes with pride, the time has come for the group to take on the project of restoration or replacement of well-worn pieces, specifically national costume blouses/shirts. They require ~27 m of cotton linen fabric to replace 12 blouses/shirts, which will be made at workshops **together with the Sydney Estonian Society’s Handicraft Association**. This will be a great collaboration between Estonian groups, and will help to teach the dancers more about Estonian national costumes and how they are made.

Sydney Estonian House Co-operative Society Limited

To date, the ECFA has been allocating grants within the limits of profits generated from its investments. However, following further discussions and considerations, the ECFA has made an exceptional decision to access it’s investments and provide additional financial support this year to what it considers a very important project – the urgent upgrade of Sydney Estonian House.

The Sydney Estonian House Co-Op needs to generate an income to maintain services and cover operating costs. However the current house is not in an optimal form. To be able to generate an income through renting out the front spaces, some key internal alterations are necessary.

Stage One of this work includes creating easily accessible and handicapped toilets at ground floor level; moving the Estonian Archives in Australia from the upstairs front space to the previous cafeteria (which necessitates strengthening the floor), and upgrading the front of house access.

The estimated cost of this Stage One work is estimated at just under \$300,000. More than half of this work will be funded by professionals donating their services and time, and by using Estonian labour to carry out the work where possible.

As well as this, the Sydney Estonian House Co-Op will be seeking available government funding for support.

The Cultural Foundation considers this worth supporting. The basics came down to – as we have recently seen with other cultural groups, that without an Estonian House as a central hub and meeting place, the culture will fade away and die.

The Estonian Cultural Foundation of Australia (ECFA) has decided to underwrite the costs of the recently announced Stage One renovation of the Sydney Estonian House, to a maximum of \$100,000.

At the deferred Annual General Meeting held in March 2021, it was agreed that the membership fee should be a flat \$5.00 for all members (other than those already granted Honorary Life Membership).

The full implications of the COVID crisis became evident during the course of the previous two years. All Board Meetings since March 2020 have been held by remote teleconferencing facilities and this will remain the norm until further notice.

We are now considering ways to hold the next Annual General Meeting via teleconferencing, but how to include long-term members such as those at Taara Gardens in Thirlmere .

The ECFA has also been heavily involved in the processes to change and update the AESL Constitution.

Dr Juho Looveer

Chairman

30th September, 2021

ORGANISATION NAME **Estonian Cultural Foundation in Australia, Limited**

Board Members/ Positions -

Dr Juho Looveer – Chairman

Dr Peeter Muttik – Deputy Chairman

Ms Ingrid Galloway (née Tartu) – Secretary

Mr Allan Mülle – Treasurer

BOARD MEMBERS :-	Mr Mart Rampe	Mr Hillar Ranniko
	Ms Maie Barrow	Mr Sulev Kalamäe