



ECFA

Estonian Cultural Foundation in Australia Ltd.
Eesti Kultuuri Sihtasutus Austraalias

ABN: 50 091 457 911



The Estonian Cultural Foundation in Australia (formerly the Estonian Relief Committee, ERC) began in 1945 when Estonian migrants in Sydney formed a welfare organisation to support refugees in post-war Europe. In its first decade, the ERC sent around 700 aid parcels and helped secure landing permits for 3,500 Estonian immigrants to Australia.

In the 1950s, the idea of an Estonian retirement village, Taara Gardens, emerged, supported by a strong Estonian community in Thirlmere. Land was purchased in 1957 and the first building opened in 1962. By 1999, Taara Gardens had expanded to 73 independent living units and a 39-bed hostel, along with additional facilities.

The organisation was incorporated as a company limited by guarantee in 2002 under the New South Wales Corporation's Law. Increasing regulatory and financial pressures over the subsequent decade made it difficult for volunteers to manage the aged-care facilities, and in 2012 the ERC completed a transaction with RSL LifeCare that saw Taara Gardens taken over in its entirety, thereby ensuring the future of Taara Gardens and its residents.

As part of the transaction with RSL LifeCare as well as ERC's absorption of the Thirlmere Estonian Society 'Koit', the ERC was left with significant cash funds and shifted its mission towards supporting Estonian cultural activities throughout Australia. In 2020, it adopted a new name—the Estonian Cultural Foundation in Australia (ECFA) or Eesti Kultuuri Sihtasutus Austraalias (EKSA)—along with a new constitution and is now registered as a charity with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC). Donations received by ECFA and returns from ECFA investments are used to give small grants towards projects that support and promote Estonian culture, language and heritage across Australia.

ECFA held its 2025 Annual General Meeting on Sunday 16th of November 2025. The incumbent office-holders are:

- **Chairman** - Lembit Suur
- **Deputy-Chairman** – Kristi Barrow
- **Secretary** – Dr Siiri Iismaa
- **Treasurer** – Elen Ellervee
- **Directors** –

Maie Barrow

Dr Juho Looveer

Dr Peeter Muttik

Hillar Ranniko

Ave Nukki

We are extremely grateful to Ingrid Galloway (née Tartu) for her many (19) years of impactful service to ERC and ECFA in the role of Secretary. We wish her well in her future endeavours.

If you're looking to be involved in ECFA, or simply want to support what we do, sign up today to become a member, for just \$5 a year! You can find our membership form here <https://ecfa.eesti.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/ECFA-Membership-Application-Form-2025.pdf>. We are a small community, all the better for pitching in to help each other.

Regards,

Lembit Suur