

ECFA

Estonian Cultural Foundation in Australia Ltd.
Eesti Kultuuri Sihtasutus Austraalias

ABN: 50 091 457 911



ANNUAL REPORT 2025

Summary of Activities of the Estonian Cultural Foundation in Australia (ECFA) July 2024 – June 2025

The Estonian Cultural Foundation in Australia is pleased to provide a summary of events and activities undertaken during the 2024-5 financial year.

In recent years we have moved most of our funds into investment portfolios. In the twelve months up till 30 June 2025, the company generated \$40,528 surplus from our investment portfolio. The details of financial results are shown in the Annual Accounts.

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.

In 2025, we had applications seeking a total of \$57,1000 in funding.

ECFA has a general policy of only allocating amounts from the profit from our investments each year, so that we do not diminish our investment base. For 2025-6, this was \$40,528.

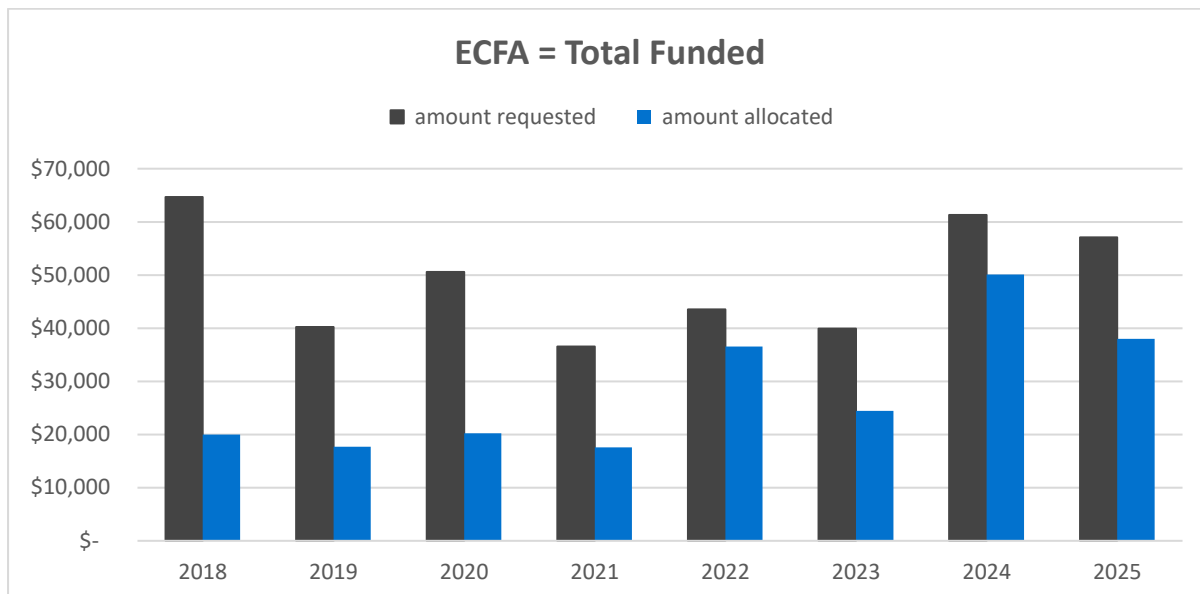
Funding approved in 2024 for the 2024-5 year included Eesti Päevad in Adelaide, as well as choirs and dance groups heading to Estonia for Laulupidu and Tantsupidu, hence that year was a large approval that also drew upon cash reserves. After considering the funding requests received this year, total funding approved in July 2025 for the 2024-5 financial year was \$38,000, as below.

It is also noteworthy that while most of our funds came from NSW, we are supporting the diaspora across the entire country.

We are waiting reports and pictures from other funding recipients. Once received, these will be posted to our website.

Donations or bequests to ECFA are most welcome, so that we can continue supporting Estonian culture and heritage across Australia.

Amounts allocated in recent years:



This shows that over recent years, ECFA has generally been increasing the amount of funding allocated.

Details of funding from ECFA approved for 2025-6

Estonian Archives in Australia= \$3,500, to replace the old computers which are out of date and cannot be upgraded. The Estonian Archives are an important repository of our memory of our culture and events in our diaspora across Australia.

HEIA - Hello Estonians in Australia (formerly the Australian Estonian Media Project / eesti.org.au) = \$2,000,

HEIA has been launched !

HEIA aims to keep you informed on what's happening in the Estonian community in Australia. Keep up with the latest events, news, consular and passport information, cultural activities, and more.

People receive an email with updated news via HEIA a few times each week, or you can simply go to their website at <https://eesti.org.au/>

This funding has been rolled over from the previous year, and will support the team who are looking to commission specific original content from professional Australian-Estonian journalists/writers in the coming year.

Estonian Language Curriculum Developing Workshop = \$5,000

The Estonian language is a key fundamental to maintaining our culture!

We have teachers working with the Mudilasrings (children's learning and playgroups) and other groups in each state.

This project involves bringing together Estonian playgroup educators and community language teachers from across Australia for a three-day intensive curriculum development workshop to be held in Sydney in February 2026.

The main aim is to develop a practical implementation plan for use in Estonian playgroups and potential Community Language Schools.

This workshop will focus on Curriculum framework for Estonian language education in older playgroups and primary school year levels Prep–Year 2. It will consider alignment of curriculum objectives and content with the Australian National Curriculum for Languages.

It should also strengthen the national network of Estonian language educators, promoting ongoing collaboration and resource sharing.

EstWest = Estonian Cultural Association in Western Australia = \$1,500,

towards the venue hire for an Estonian family-and-music Christmas festival in December 2025.

The Perth Estonian Christmas Festival aims to bring joy and connection to over 250 children and their families in their community. This event is designed to engage both young school-aged children and youth, while also including meaningful, intergenerational activities that welcome seniors in a supportive and festive environment.

Newy EestLASTE Kultuuriring (Language and Culture Club for Estonian

Kids in Newcastle) = \$700, to provide ongoing opportunities for Newcastle and Hunter region children to get acquainted with Estonian language and culture through songs, dances, stories, games, cultural activities and excursions.

Sydney Mudilasring, Estonian Children's Playgroup in Sydney = \$2,000,

to support the work of this group in fostering and developing Estonian culture for young children in Sydney. This Mudilasring meets weekly and promotes Estonian language, music and culture among Estonian families and their young children, and strengthens the Estonian community in Sydney. The playgroup continues to be a place for Estonian families and children to meet, speak Estonian, sing, dance, and celebrate holidays. In 2024, this group expanded to also include pre-school sessions for 4 years and above.

Sydney Estonian Handicraft Circle = \$2,000

SESKKE have commenced the **establishment of a “library” of Estonian folk-costumes (rahvariided). in Australia.** They aim to collect pre-loved rahvariided, be it on loan or donated, then repair, clean, maintain and lend out

to people when needed for performances. They are also making new rahvariided from materials purchased in Estonia, especially children's clothes. Funding for 2025-6 is mainly for software to manage and maintain inventory of the library.

Estonian Society in Melbourne = \$2,000,

to conduct an Estonian childrens' Language and Culture camp.

Building on the success of last year's initiative, the Estonian Children's Language and Culture Camp 2025 aims to further strengthen the connection between Estonian families across Melbourne and regional Victoria.

Gold Coast Estonian Society = \$3,000,

to conduct an Estonian childrens' Language and Culture camp =

Queensland'i Perelaager. The Gold Coast Estonian Society, is organising a family camp in November 2025 for the Estonian communities of Gold Coast and Brisbane. The 3-day, 2-night camp will be held in Tyalgum and is designed for families with children aged 0–15, offering age-appropriate activities in Estonian. The camp aims to foster a deeper sense of cultural identity and ensure the long-term sustainability of the Estonian diaspora in Australia. The camp is already fully booked, with a substantial wait-list.

Melbourne Estonian Society Craft Group = \$900,

Kirivööd - Estonian-Baltic band weaving. The aim is to conduct workshops to teach traditional Estonian pick up band/belt weaving in Victoria. The group plans to expand on this to other activities in future years.

Sydney Estonian Society, Australia tour: Piip and Tuut - Children/Family play = \$5,500,

This funding is to support the promoters to bring a 2-person play to Australia, with performances in main cities. (<https://piipjatuut.ee/>)

Piip and Tuut won the Estonian Theatre Prize of the Year in 2014 as the best company playing for the young audience and were nominated for the same prize in 2018, 2021 and 2023; However, they have a unique audience by appealing to the whole family. In 2022 they were decorated with a state award - the Order of the White Star by the President of Estonian Republic.

Sydney Estonian Society, Australia tour: Mamma Lood (Nana's stories) - Children/Family play = \$2,000,

This funding is to support bringing a performance to Australia, with performances in main cities. Actor Margus Tabor - Ugala Theater.

In almost everyone's life there has been a Nana. A confident woman who raised a flock of children, who persisted through fire, floods, soviet rule and of

course a drunk husband. Nana through her long life's experience has many stories to tell. Sadly her stories are disappearing with time but some still survive. To memorialize this priceless inheritance, Viljandi Ugala theater's Margus Tabor brings his own Nana's stories to the stage. And not just her stories but the entire life philosophy of Hiiumaa!

Estonian 'Sörve' Childrens' Camp (7th to 14th January 2024) = \$8,000,

the annual camp, is a key cultural and social Estonian community event, that has been running for over 60 years, and provides a rich experience for children and all adults, sharing customs, heritage, language, dancing and singing. As in previous years, the camp is to be held in regional NSW.

Hans Ots Grant = \$1,900,

This grant is provided by ECFA and administered by Sörve Söbrad. The purpose is to provide financial assistance to children or leaders who are resident in Australia and who, because of excessive cost of travel, financial or other hardship reasons would otherwise not be able to attend the annual children's summer camp. By agreement, this year's grant was reduced due to a surplus from previous years.

TOTAL AMOUNTS AWARDED for 2025-6 = \$38,000

As noted in last year's report, we need to consider the future and possible implications for the Estonian diaspora across Australia.

Our Estonian diaspora is expanding the range of activities, and increasing their number. To date, we have been judging applications on their merits, projected impact and value to the community, as well as on how they contribute to Estonian culture. It is likely that as these keep increasing, we will need to determine priorities according to how much the activities contribute to the wide diaspora.

We plan to further discuss our investments in the coming year, in particular our appetite for risk – do we want to chance increasing our income and our assets? .

The Board has been considering the dwindling ECFA membership, and considering the composition of the Board for the future. Ideally we would like to expand the membership to people from other states, and see new Directors from there as well.

Our new Constitution, adopted on 20 March 2022, generally limits Directors to six years; after that time, they should step down for at least a year, to enhance rejuvenation of the Board. This Rule is impacting on this meeting's decisions.

While preparing for the 2025 AGM, we uncovered a contradiction in the Constitution. Hence the first item of business in the agenda was a Special resolution to amend this situation.

We also became aware of an anomaly in the appointment of the Treasurer in the last year. As soon as this was realised, the Board took steps to rectify this situation.

In the coming year, we will continue to review the Constitution, as part of our due diligence. We continually need to update e.g. developing procedures to accommodate modern technology, and enhance meetings.

I thank my fellow Directors for their ongoing contributions throughout the year, and look [forward to](#) continuing this work in the coming years.

In particular, I would like to thank Hillar Ranniko, who has served as a Director of ECFA for 23 years; Dr Peeter Muttik, who has served as a Director for 22 years; and Ms Ingrid Galloway (nee Tartu), who has been on the Board for 19 years.

I would ask you to all join me in giving these three people a standing ovation for their contribution to Estonian culture over many many years.

We look forward to continue working with the Estonian diaspora in Australia, to enhance Estonian culture and language and community.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dr Juho Looveer". The script is cursive and elegant.

Dr Juho Looveer

Chairman

20th October, 2025

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

Board Members/ Positions (2024 – elected on 5th November 2024)

Dr Juho Looveer – Chairman

Dr Peeter Muttik – Deputy Chairman

Ms Ingrid Galloway (née Tartu) – Secretary

Ms Elen Ellervee – Treasurer

BOARD MEMBERS : - Mr Hillar Ranniko

Ms Maie Barrow

Ms Kristi Barrow

Mr Lembit Suur

Ms Siiri Iisma

Ms Ave Nukki