



## **Meet Athena Papadatos, Disability Advocate for CALD Communities at the ECCV**

“In keeping with our vision, values and mission, the Ethnic Communities’ Council of Victoria (ECCV) aims to enhance the skills of people from CALD backgrounds living with disability. We work to empower them to advocate for themselves, ensuring that their voices can be heard across the service system and in our communities,” said Eddie Micallef, ECCV Board Chairperson.

“ECCV has expanded its Disability Advocacy work in CALD communities to regional Victoria after achieving great success with our initial Disability Advocacy position in Dandenong. We’re pleased to welcome Athena to our team,” said Eddie.

Athena Papadatos spends her Mondays getting in touch with organisations and individuals with disability in Shepparton to increase their independence and confidence to speak up for themselves.

Coming from a multicultural background and with lived experience of disability herself, Athena is familiar with the unique day-to-day and systemic challenges faced by people with disability at the intersection of disability and cultural diversity. Drawing on her lived experiences of physical disability and being from a Greek background, Athena hopes to make a difference in Shepparton, where she has lived for the last 30 years.

As a Disability Advocate for CALD Communities at ECCV, Athena’s duties extend beyond coaching others from a CALD background who have a disability on how to speak up for themselves. Her work can also include assisting people with referrals to agencies for support, or helping people determine best options that may enhance their participation in the wider community.

In helping others who may face similar experiences to herself on how to make the right choices and take control of their lives, Athena understands that this can’t be done alone. Working with other organisations and community members, she hopes these collaborative efforts will take us all one step closer to achieving a truly inclusive society for all.

To get in touch with Athena Papadatos, ECCV’s Disability Advocate for CALD Communities, please email her at [apapadatos@eccv.org.au](mailto:apapadatos@eccv.org.au).

EOM

For interview opportunities, please contact Anjali Nambissan – ECCV Membership and Communications Coordinator – on [anambissan@eccv.org.au](mailto:anambissan@eccv.org.au) or call 0431 091 738

*Ethnic Communities’ Council of Victoria (ECCV) is the peak advocacy body for culturally diverse communities in Victoria, since 1974. As the voice for multicultural Victoria, ECCV is the conduit with government and other stakeholders. We are a member driven organisation representing over 220 organisations across Victoria. - [www.eccv.org.au](http://www.eccv.org.au)*