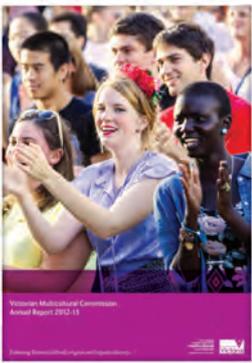


Victorian Multicultural Commission
Annual Report 2012-13

Enhancing Victoria's cultural, religious and linguistic diversity.

VICTORIAN
multicultural
commission
strengthening our community





ANNUAL REPORT 2012-13

The 2012-13 Annual Report covers the core work of the Commission and its achievements within the context of its objectives and functions, as outlined in the *Multicultural Victoria Act 2011*.

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This report can also be viewed online at:
www.multicultural.vic.gov.au

Photographer: Jorge de Araujo

Copies of this Annual Report can be obtained from the Victorian Multicultural Commission:

TELEPHONE (03) 9651 0651
FACSIMILE (03) 9651 0612
EMAIL info@vmc.vic.gov.au



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Victorian Refugee Recognition Record inductee Daniel Zewdu with family

Photographer: Belinda Richards



The Hon. Nicholas Kotsiras MP
Minister for Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship
Minister for Energy and Resources
1 Spring Street
Melbourne Vic 3000

Dear Minister,

In accordance with Section 21 of the *Multicultural Victoria Act (2011)*,
I have great pleasure in reporting on the Commission's operations
for the period 1 July 2012 to 30 June 2013.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chin Tan". The signature is stylized and includes a small triangle at the end of the last stroke.

Chin Tan
CHAIRPERSON

strengthening our community



This previous year, was a year of considerable growth and consolidation for the VMC. Our Annual Report is an opportunity to reflect on the work we've done and look at what lies ahead.

Our Commissioners are now well established in their roles and provide a range of knowledge and skills to address the issues, challenges and opportunities facing our increasingly diverse society.

The research function of the Commission, established by the MV Act 2011, was strengthened and expanded to include the development of a series of research proposals which aimed to build on the capacity of government-related services to meet the needs of diverse communities.

In February, we reintroduced the Community Grants Program, previously managed by the Office of Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship. Grants and sponsorships give the Commission a direct, tangible connection with the communities we serve. This year the Commission provided \$5.6 million to the community through approximately 2,400 grants.

We continued to consult regularly with the community through the Regional Advisory Councils (RACs) and annual statewide community consultations. The discussions and priorities identified at RAC meetings will be fed back to the government to inform the development of policy, legislation and service delivery. Community consultations provided us with a list of key issues facing our communities. As Chairperson, I am committed to engaging with the Victorian public, and faith and community leaders and to ensure that the changing needs of communities are acknowledged, understood and addressed.

Our awards and recognition programs proved a highlight this year. As usual, the highly anticipated Victorian Multicultural Awards for Excellence at Government House was a successful and rewarding event. More than 200 people and organisations were nominated for their outstanding service to Victoria's multicultural and wider community. The Victorian Refugee Recognition Record program was particularly inspiring. Many of the inductees have taken on leadership roles within their communities and all inductees show a strong commitment to bettering their life and the lives of those around them (portraits of some of the inductees are featured in this report). Each year, I am moved by the stories of the people recognised in these programs and the significant contribution they make towards community harmony, despite often having suffered hardship and trauma in their own lives.

Cultural Diversity Week was held from 16 to 24 March 2013 and was a great success, in fact it was the Commission's 'best ever'. The Premier's Gala Dinner, always a popular event, launched the celebrations, with nearly 1,500 people joining together for a spectacular evening of multicultural dance, music and entertainment. The week culminated in the popular Viva Victoria festival, where more than 45,000 people enjoyed the festivities at Federation Square.



This year, Cultural Diversity Week had a focus on connecting with youth and schools, and the Commission produced and distributed a Teachers' Resource Kit to schools providing teachers with ideas and lesson planning around the theme. In addition, we held a Primary School Art Competition which received hundreds of entries. I was particularly impressed with the quality and thoughtfulness of these artworks and would like to acknowledge the work of the schools, teachers and students who entered. I wasn't the only person impressed – one of the student paintings now has pride of place in Minister Kotsiras' office.

Each year, I see an increase in the number of people who show their support for Victoria's cultural diversity during Cultural Diversity Week. This year close to 300 community groups, schools, workplaces and organisations hosted their own events during the week making it a truly statewide event. I'd like to congratulate and thank everyone that took part in and supported the week, especially our sponsors. It is yet another example of the wonderful multicultural society we are so fortunate to enjoy here in Victoria.

I would like to thank my fellow Commissioners and staff at the VMC for their support and hard work during the past year. It is a privilege to work with such a passionate and dedicated group of people who strive to celebrate, promote and nurture Victoria's multiculturalism at every opportunity. In particular I would like to acknowledge the work of our three outgoing Commissioners, Mr Yasser Soliman, Mr Phillip Bain and our Youth Commissioner Ms Yasmin Hassen. Each of these Commissioners has made an outstanding and lasting contribution to the Commission. I thank them for their support and wish them well for the future.

I would also like to extend my thanks to the Hon. Nicholas Kotsiras MP, Minister for Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship, Minister for Energy and Resources for his support and his unwavering commitment to a multicultural Victoria.

Most importantly, I'd like to thank the community organisations, leaders, staff and volunteers, who make an incredible difference in people's lives. It is due to their tireless work that our multicultural society is one of the most admired and liveable in the world.

Pictured above: Victorian Refugee Recognition Record (VRRR) 2013 presentation ceremony (from left to right) Mr Andrew Crisp, Assistant Commissioner Victoria Police; Mr Chin Tan, Chairperson VMC; Mr Monga Mukasa, VRRR inductee; and, Ms Jill Morgan AM, CEO Multicultural Arts Victoria. Photographer: Vicki Jones

enhancing Victoria's cultural, religious and linguistic diversity

The Victorian Multicultural Commission (VMC) provides assistance to culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) Victorians and provides honest and candid advice to the Victorian Government. Operating since 1983, formally re-established by the *Multicultural Victoria Act 2004*, and strengthened under the *Multicultural Victoria Act 2011*, the Commission acts as a conduit between the Victorian community and the Victorian Government, and is first and foremost a voice for CALD communities. The VMC is committed to fostering goodwill and understanding among Victorians from all walks of life, language, culture and faith and works toward creating a stable, harmonious and progressive society which embraces its diversity and is open to the world.

OUR ROLE

The VMC is the main link between Victoria's CALD communities and the Victorian Government. Its aim is to support and empower communities, promote unity and understanding, and celebrate Victoria's diversity. The Commission also provides independent advice to the Victorian Government to inform the development of legislative and policy frameworks, as well as the delivery of services to our multicultural society.

The Commission operates under the *Multicultural Victoria Act 2011*, which conveys the Victorian Government's commitment to recognise and support cultural, religious and linguistic diversity in Victoria and enhance the responsiveness and accountability of government departments in meeting the needs of all Victorians.

ABOUT THE MULTICULTURAL VICTORIA ACT 2011

The Multicultural Victoria Act 2011 (MV Act 2011) enshrines in legislation a preamble and a set of principles that recognise the State's cultural, religious and linguistic diversity as one of Victoria's greatest assets. It also recognises that one of the central tenets of multiculturalism is citizenship, and that the expression of citizenship is not limited to formal Australian citizenship, but incorporates the rights and responsibilities of all people in a multicultural society.

In broad terms, this legislation serves as a formal declaration of Victoria's commitment to diversity and community harmony. It commits all of us to work together to ensure a prosperous and united future in which diversity is respected and cultural heritage preserved, and where all individuals can access opportunities to participate in and contribute to the social, cultural, economic and political life of the State. The Act operates within the overarching framework of abiding by the State's laws and respecting the democratic processes under which those laws are made.



Premier's Gala Dinner 2013
Photographer: Jorge de Araujo

MV Act 2011 Preamble

- 1) The Parliament recognises and values the cultural, religious, racial and linguistic diversity of the people of Victoria.
- 2) The Parliament further recognises that one of the central tenets of multiculturalism is citizenship and that the expression of citizenship is not limited to formal Australian citizenship, but refers to the rights and responsibilities of all people in a multicultural society.
- 3) The Parliament wishes to promote Victoria as a united community with shared laws, values, aspirations and responsibilities within which people from a diversity of backgrounds have—
 - a) the freedom and opportunity to preserve and express their cultural heritage; and
 - b) the freedom and opportunity to participate and contribute to the social, cultural, economic and political life of Victoria; and
 - c) equal rights and responsibilities under the laws of Victoria.

MV Act 2011 Principles of Multiculturalism

- 1) Parliament recognises that the people of Victoria are united in their shared commitment to—
 - a) a democratic framework governed by the rule of law; and
 - b) Victoria and Australia and the people, interests and future of Victoria and Australia.
- 2) Parliament further recognises that all Victorians come from diverse cultural, religious, racial and linguistic backgrounds and values the richness that such diversity brings to the Victorian community.
- 3) Parliament supports the rights and responsibilities of citizenship to which subsection (1) refers and promotes the diversity to which subsection (2) refers by recognising the following principles of multiculturalism—
 - a) all individuals in Victoria are entitled to mutual respect and understanding regardless of their diverse backgrounds;
 - b) all individuals and institutions in Victoria should promote and preserve diversity and cultural heritage within the context of shared laws, values, aspirations and responsibilities;
 - c) all individuals in Victoria (regardless of background) have shown that they can work together to build a positive and progressive future and this cooperation is to be encouraged so as to enhance Victoria as a great place in which to live;
 - d) all individuals in Victoria are equally entitled to access opportunities and participate in and contribute to the social, cultural, economic and political life of this State;
 - e) all individuals in Victoria have a responsibility to abide by the State's laws and respect the democratic processes under which those laws are made;
 - f) all individuals in Victoria should be united in a shared commitment to Australia and to community service;
 - g) all individuals and institutions should recognise Victoria's diversity as an asset and a valuable resource benefiting Australia.
- 4) Parliament further recognises that Victoria's diversity should be reflected in a whole-of-government approach to policy development, implementation and evaluation.

This report provides a snapshot of the VMC's activities and achievements in the 2012-13 financial year within the context of its objectives and functions under the MV Act 2011.

VMC OBJECTIVES

As specified in the MV Act 2011, the VMC's objectives (section 7) are to:

- promote full participation by Victoria's diverse communities in the social, cultural, economic and political life of Victoria;
- promote access by Victoria's diverse communities to services made available by governments and other bodies;
- encourage all of Victoria's diverse communities to retain and express their social identity and cultural inheritance and to promote mutual respect;
- promote co-operation between bodies concerned with multicultural affairs and diversity;
- promote unity, understanding and harmony among Victoria's diverse communities;
- promote a better understanding of Victoria's diverse communities;
- promote interaction between individuals and communities from diverse backgrounds;
- promote the social, cultural and economic benefits of diversity;
- promote the rights and responsibilities of citizenship as a unifying force that strengthens our diverse multicultural community; and
- promote community service as a principle that builds a stronger society.

WHAT WE DO

As specified in the MV Act 2011, the VMC's functions (section 8) are to:

- ensure that the objectives of the Commission are met to the maximum extent that is practicable;
- research, report and advise the Minister on systemic community issues relating to the objectives of the Commission
 - that are identified by regional advisory councils or through other community consultation; or
 - that relate to the adequacy of government services, settlement support or service delivery for diverse communities;
- investigate, report and make recommendations to the Minister on any aspect of multicultural affairs referred to it by the Minister;
- advise the Minister on factors inhibiting the development of harmonious community relations and on barriers to the participation of Victoria's diverse communities in the social, cultural, economic and political life of Victoria;
- undertake systematic and wide-ranging consultation with bodies and people to
 - determine the needs of Victoria's diverse communities, including any needs covered by a report prepared by the Minister under section 28; and
 - promote the objectives of the Commission;
- develop and maintain partnerships between community organisations in providing assistance in settlement support and service delivery for diverse communities; and
- develop and maintain harmonious community relations between all relevant groups in the context of Victoria's diverse communities.

OUR COMMISSIONERS

The VMC comprises 12 Commissioners, who advocate the values of the VMC and act as a conduit between the community and the Commission. Our Commissioners have a solid understanding of the issues facing ethnic communities and are actively involved in the community, regularly attending events and playing a vital role in assisting networks and liaising between different faith and community groups.

VMC Commissioners also promote the views of the community at a range of committees and forums at local, state and national level. The Commissioners are in constant contact with the Chairperson and meet regularly to develop strategies and discuss community issues that require action. Commissioners are selected through a competitive interview process, and are then officially appointed by the Governor of Victoria for terms of up to four years. The Commissioners listed below were appointed on 1 September 2011.

Commissioners

- Mr Chin Tan – Chairperson
- Mr Spiro (Ross) Alatsas – Deputy Chairperson
- Ms Yasmin Hassen – Youth Commissioner
- Ms Marion Lau OAM JP – Community Representative Commissioner
- Mr Phillip Bain
- Dr Teresa De Fazio
- Ms Elizabeth Drozd
- Mr Grahame J Leonard AM
- Mr Huseyin Mustafa
- Mr Yasser Soliman
- Ms Jenny Matic
- Mr Chidambaram Srinivasan

The Commissioners meet regularly to discuss issues of importance to Victoria’s culturally and linguistically diverse communities. Commission meeting attendance from 1 July 2012 to 30 June 2013 is outlined below:

Commissioner number of meetings attended	
Mr Chin Tan	7
Mr Spiro (Ross) Alatsas	7
Ms Yasmin Hassen	7
Ms Marion Lau OAM JP	7
Mr Phillip Bain	0
Dr Teresa De Fazio	6
Ms Elizabeth Drozd	6
Mr Grahame J Leonard AM	4
Mr Huseyin Mustafa	6
Mr Yasser Soliman	7
Ms Jenny Matic	5
Mr Chidambaram Srinivasan	7

During the reporting period, Commissioners continued to participate in community functions, consultations, events, conferences and seminars. In 2012-13, the Commissioners collectively attended approximately 575 community engagements.

OUR STAFF

During the year, the Commissioners were supported by dedicated VMC staff who worked closely with the Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson and Commissioners to ensure that the VMC performed its legislative functions and achieved its core objectives. As at 30 June 2013 the Commission comprised of 11.5 FTE staff.

EXPENDITURE

Salaries and on costs	\$1,437,251
Operating expenses, including RACs	\$969,945
Sponsorship	\$103,905
TOTAL	\$2,511,101



VMC Commissioners: (back row) Mr Chidambaram Srinivasan, Mr Yasser Soliman, Mr Grahame J Leonard AM; (middle row) Mr Chin Tan (Chairperson), Mr Phillip Bain, Mr Huseyin Mustafa, Mr Spiro (Ross) Alatsas; (front row) Ms Elizabeth Drozd, Dr Teresa De Fazio, Ms Marion Lau OAM JP, Ms Yasmin Hassen, Ms Jenny Matic.



Viva Victoria multicultural festival 2013

Photographer: Jorge de Araujo

advice to the Victorian Government and engaging with our CALD communities

The VMC oversees eight Regional Advisory Councils (RACs) that provide advice on matters relating to the objectives and functions of the Commission. In doing so, the RACs identify areas of systemic need and issues relevant to their respective geographic regions. This input from the RACs helps the VMC to ensure the changing needs of CALD communities are understood and responded to – and that the VMC is properly informed when engaging with faith and community leaders, and the Victorian public.

REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCILS

Three RACs are based in Melbourne and surrounds – Eastern Metropolitan, North and West Metropolitan, and Southern Metropolitan region – and five are based in rural and regional Victoria – Barwon South West, Hume, Loddon Mallee, Gippsland and Grampians regions.

Each RAC is presided over by a Commissioner of the VMC and may have up to 13 other members, appointed for a two-year term, including:

- up to 10 community members who are local residents or representatives from service providers, community organisations or local business organisations; and
- up to three local government representatives.

The RAC members are selected through an open application process. All RAC members are volunteers, chosen for their demonstrated affiliation with the region and their knowledge of local multicultural affairs and citizenship issues.

Including RAC Chairpersons, there are currently 84 RAC members across Victoria, with eight standing down or resigning during the 2012-13 period. A full list of 2012-13 RAC membership is at Appendix 1.

Each RAC meets up to three times a year in different locations around the specific region. During 2012-13, three rounds of meetings were held across each of the eight RAC regions. Discussions focussed on multicultural and settlement priorities for each region, including: access to education, housing and employment; health and aged care; translation and interpreting services; combating racism and discrimination; and, promoting cultural diversity. This information informs the work of the VMC and its advice to the Victorian Government on the development of policy, legislation and the delivery of services.



COMMUNITY CONSULTATIONS

Every year the VMC holds a series of community consultations across Victoria to seek feedback from Victoria's culturally and linguistically diverse communities. The consultations enable the VMC and Victorian Government to gain an understanding about how they are performing in multicultural affairs, as set out under Section 8(e) of the MV Act 2011.

From 19 September to 25 October 2012, the VMC held 12 community consultations throughout metropolitan and regional Victoria, including three community consultations for women, youth, and peak bodies/ service providers.

The consultations gave members of the public, community groups and service providers the opportunity to provide feedback on the Victorian Government's progress in multicultural affairs, as outlined in the report *Victorian Government Initiatives and Reporting in Multicultural Affairs 2010-11*, and on the local issues and needs of CALD communities. The consultations also provided an opportunity for participants to hear about the Victorian Government's approach and plan for a multicultural Victoria, through a presentation from the VMC and the Office of Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship (OMAC).

The key themes arising from the 2012 consultations were:

- the need for better access to high quality, culturally responsive services including language and settlement services, education and employment;
- the need for dedicated responses to issues facing CALD communities such as racism and discrimination, understanding the legal system, isolation, disengagement and youth justice; and
- the need to promote the benefits of multiculturalism through the media, events, festivals and intercultural dialogue.

Issues raised in the consultations may be responded to by the VMC, OMAC or be referred to the relevant Victorian Government departments. The VMC also uses the information and feedback to inform its research program and other aspects of work.

RESEARCH AND INVESTIGATION

The MV Act 2011 outlines the functions for the VMC in relation to research and investigation. Under the Act, the VMC is required to:

- research, report and advise the Minister on systemic community issues relating to the objectives of the Commission; and

- investigate, report and make recommendations to the Minister on any aspect of multicultural affairs referred to it by the Minister.

The VMC's research and advice is largely focused on multicultural and settlement issues arising from community consultations, the RACs, meetings with key stakeholders and the community.

The VMC's aim is to promote: access to high quality, culturally responsive services for Victoria's diverse communities; the full participation of diverse communities in Victorian life; and, the social, cultural and economic benefits of diversity.

In 2012-13, the VMC further developed its research program by identifying a series of research proposals that aim to build on the capacity of government related services to meet the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

The VMC also plays a key role in providing advice to the Victorian Government and other community, government and business stakeholders on multicultural affairs. This includes making submissions and providing feedback to government and parliamentary inquiries on issues of concern to multicultural communities, and in 2012-13 included: participating in the cross-jurisdictional submission to the Australian Bureau of Statistics review of the 2016 Census Population and Housing; working with Indian community leaders in response to issues affecting the community; and, initiating and taking part in activities in response to issues such as racial vilification, domestic violence, settlement and other matters facing multicultural communities.

The VMC Chairperson, Commissioners and Director participate in committees and reference groups including:

- Police and Community Multicultural Advisory Committee (PACMAC)
- Ministerial Advisory Council for a Multilingual and Multicultural Victoria
- AFL Multicultural Strategy Roundtable
- Asian Cup 2015 Steering Committee
- Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission's Racial Hatred Project Reference Group
- Department of Primary Industries' Senior Manager Multi-Agency Forum
- Multifaith Advisory Group
- Inter-departmental Group.



Victorian Refugee Recognition Record inductee Aliye Geleto Anota
Photographer: Zoe Scotland

in celebration and appreciation of our diversity

The VMC is committed to fostering awareness of the benefits that our rich cultural, linguistic and religious diversity brings to Victoria. We have a strong commitment to ensuring that cultural diversity remains one of our State's greatest assets.

In 2012-13 the VMC used its wide-reaching communication network to:

- promote mutual respect and understanding of diversity through campaigns and targeted activities;
- inform and connect multicultural communities, including developments in government relevant to multicultural affairs, via publications, online resources and media announcements; and
- celebrate Victoria's cultural, linguistic and religious diversity through a series of local and major events.

CULTURAL DIVERSITY WEEK

This year's Cultural Diversity Week (CDW) ran from 16 to 24 March. The annual program is coordinated by the VMC and encourages the participation of all Victorians in recognising and celebrating the vast benefits that cultural and linguistic diversity bring to our State. Importantly, CDW also marks the United Nations International Day for the Elimination of Racism on 21 March, which reaffirms our belief in the right of all Victorians to live freely without fear of discrimination and vilification.

The VMC supported almost 300 statewide CDW events, either with funding from our Community Grants Program, or in the form of providing free promotional materials and publicity. There was involvement from many sectors, with community groups, local government authorities, state government departments and agencies, service providers, schools, hospitals, libraries and small businesses all registering their CDW events. Events ranged from large-scale festivals, sporting events and forums, to multicultural lunches, story-telling sessions, and cultural excursions.

The VMC holds two flagship events during CDW; the Premier's Gala Dinner, and the Viva Victoria multicultural festival.



The Premier's Gala Dinner, held at Crown Entertainment Complex on Saturday 16 March, attracted almost 1,500 guests including representatives from government, business, and culturally and linguistically diverse communities. Guests were treated to a spectacular evening of entertainment from multicultural performers, and an excellent networking opportunity.

The Viva Victoria multicultural festival, held at Federation Square on Sunday 24 March, attracted a record crowd of over 45,000 people from around 60 different cultures, who enjoyed music, dance, art and craft, food, sports clinics, workshops, and children's activities. The festival included four stages of entertainment, featuring a diverse range of performers including musicians, dance troupes, spoken-word poets, contortionists and comedians. Viva Victoria is the VMC's public celebration of CDW, and allows people of all walks of life and cultural backgrounds to experience and appreciate Victoria's diversity.

This year the VMC placed a strong emphasis on connecting with youth and schools during CDW. Accordingly, the Commission produced the Cultural Diversity Week Teachers' Resource Kit, which provided both primary and secondary school teachers with inspiration for excursions, activities,

and lesson planning around the theme, as well as a detailed list of text, online and video resources. The VMC also held a Cultural Diversity Week Primary School Art Competition, asking students to submit work based on the theme 'My Family, My Culture'. The Commission received hundreds of high-quality and thoughtful artworks from which finalists were selected in three age categories. Finalists were recognised, and winners announced, by the Hon. Nicholas Kotsiras MP, Minister for Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship, Minister for Energy and Resources, at a presentation ceremony held during the Viva Victoria festival.

AWARDS AND INITIATIVES

Victoria's Multicultural Awards for Excellence

Victoria's Multicultural Awards for Excellence were established by the VMC in 2002 to recognise and reward the contribution of individuals and organisations in the promotion of Victoria's multicultural harmony.

More than 200 nominations were received in the following categories:

- Meritorious Service to the Community Awards
- Service Delivery to Multicultural Victoria Awards
- Police and Community Multicultural Advisory Committee Awards (PACMAC Awards)
- Victorian Multicultural Education Awards
- Local Government Award
- Victorian Multicultural Commission Ambassador Awards
- Victorian Multicultural Business Awards
 - Marketing Award
 - Corporate Innovative Award
- Victorian Multicultural Honour Roll
- Premier's Award for Community Harmony.

The awards were assessed by the VMC – excluding the PACMAC Awards and the Victorian Multicultural Education Awards, which were received and assessed by the respective departments.

The ceremony for Victoria's Multicultural Awards for Excellence was held at Government House on 18 December 2012, where 119 recipients were presented with awards. A full list of the 2013 recipients of Victoria's Multicultural Awards for Excellence is at Appendix 2.

CASE STUDY

Premier's Award for Community Harmony – The Huddle, North Melbourne Football Club



The Huddle, North Melbourne Football Club, received the Premier's Award for Community Harmony at Victoria's Multicultural Awards for Excellence 2012.

The Huddle is the community and education arm of the North Melbourne Football Club. Established in 2010, the Huddle provides a multi-faceted approach to addressing social cohesion issues among young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds in North Melbourne, Flemington, Kensington, West Melbourne, and the City of Wyndham. The Huddle also runs a satellite program in the City of Ballarat.

The Huddle's activities are developed and delivered by teaching staff, in conjunction with the North Melbourne Football Club playing group, and young people from the local communities. The activities take place in The Huddle classrooms at Arden Street in the heart of North Melbourne, as well as in schools and communities throughout the West and North of Melbourne, Wyndham and Ballarat.

In 2012, The Huddle programs reached 9,000 people, who, between them, participated in the programs a total of 20,000 times. The programs use technology, sport, positive education, team building, mentoring and role models to challenge and engage; create active community participants; and, develop young people into leaders.

Victorian Refugee Recognition Record

The Victorian Refugee Recognition Record (VRRR) – an initiative of the VMC - celebrates and documents the diverse contributions that people of refugee backgrounds have made to their own communities and to the State of Victoria more widely.

The VRRR was first held in 2004, and recognises Refugee Week (16 to 22 June 2013) – Australia’s peak annual activity to inform the public on refugee issues and to celebrate the positive contributions made by people of refugee background to Australian society. Refugee Week is coordinated by the Refugee Council of Australia.

Nominations for the VRRR are open to any individual who is a refugee, former refugee, or humanitarian entrant, who is now a permanent resident of Victoria. The VMC assembles a panel of assessors to review the nominations and select the successful nominees. This year the panel selected 22 new inductees to the VRRR.

This year’s successful nominees work - either in a paid or voluntary capacity – in a range of different industries including; music and performance, sport, support services, health services, and local government. They reside in regions across the State, including; Shepparton, Geelong, Horsham, Nhill and Melbourne.

VRRR recipients represent many different cultures and age groups, and work in many different fields. All have been selected for the significant contribution they have made towards fostering community harmony. Many dedicate time to voluntary work, either within their own local community, or the community at large. Most of them have taken on leadership roles within their communities, and provide support to others who are marginalised or disadvantaged. All of them hold a common commitment to bettering their life and the lives of those around them, often despite having suffered extreme hardship and trauma.

As part of the program, a portrait photograph of each VRRR inductee is taken for inclusion in an exhibition which is launched during Refugee Week. This year the VMC worked with RMIT University staff and photography students from the School of Media and Communication who met and photographed each of the inductees – these portraits were on exhibition at the foyer space of 1 Spring Street, Melbourne during June and July 2013.

This year’s VRRR inductees were formally recognised by VMC Chairperson, Mr Chin Tan, at a presentation ceremony held at fortyfivedownstairs in Melbourne, on Monday 24 June 2013. A full list of the VRRR 2013 recipients is at Appendix 3.

Stories of Hope

In recognition of Refugee Week 2012 and its theme of ‘Restoring Hope’, the VMC launched a new initiative called Stories of Hope.

The initiative provided the opportunity for aspiring writers, poets and spoken-word artists from new and emerging communities to undertake free workshops with celebrated author Arnold Zable, and Co-Director of the Centre for Poetics and Justice, Alia Gabres. Through these sessions, participants – many of who are from refugee backgrounds – were able to develop and share their own stories of hope.

Workshops were held in story-writing (facilitated by Arnold Zable) and spoken-word performance (facilitated by Alia Gabres), and follow-up sessions allowed participants to share and further hone their stories, with advice provided by their facilitators and peers.

Participants in the workshops represented a diverse range of cultural backgrounds including; Kurdish, Siere Leonean, Afghani, Colombian, Oromo, Chinese, Thai and Tuvaluan.

Participants in the story-writing workshop had the opportunity to have their short stories published in the VMC’s *MV Magazine*.

CASE STUDY *Stories of Hope*

Afghani Zakia Baig, a participant in the Stories of Hope creative writing workshop, wrote the following poem for those children who live in the caves of the Bamyán mountain in Afghanistan.

I wish I had a home with windows
I grew up in dust, I played in dark
I waited for the moon, I counted stars
I love to dream a dream of day
A day with green not only with grey
I like green a life it means
My mother’s cloth, my sheep in fields
I love to see all everywhere
No dust no smoke
No red but green
But I live in black
My home is dark
I call a cave my home in rocks
It hurts sometimes
My feet when bleed
I walk always my home bare feet
I fear at night when shadows talk
I wish I had a home with windows
Where light could push out
All fear full shadows.



LEFT TO RIGHT VMC Publications: MV Magazine, October, March and June; Annual Report 2011-12.

PRINT AND ONLINE COMMUNICATION

The Commission uses a variety of communication tools to keep people informed about multicultural events and initiatives in Victoria.

Print

The VMC produces a range of print publications each year. Publications printed in 2012-13 included:

- Annual Report 2011-12
- MV Magazine (three issues – October 2012, March 2013 and June 2013)
- Viva Victoria festival program
- Victoria’s Multicultural Awards for Excellence guidelines, nomination forms and award recipient booklets.

Online

The VMC website (www.multicultural.vic.gov.au) continues to be an important communications resource, providing regular news and updates for community groups, as well as advertising community and government events and activities with a multicultural focus. In 2012-13 there were 79,762 unique visitors to the website; 40 per cent of these were new and 60 per cent returning visitors.

The multicultural website comprises six sections:

- About Us – legislation, VMC, OMAC
- Grants – information on how to apply for funding
- Population and Migration – statistical information
- Events and Initiatives – information on VMC projects and calendar of multicultural events
- Regional Advisory Councils – including a login area for RAC members
- Resources – publications, media releases, articles and research.

The VMC delivers a fortnightly e-newsletter, *VMC Update*, to over 2,500 email subscribers.

It provides information on upcoming events, plus government and community-based projects and programs. Previous issues of *VMC Update* and PDF copies of *MV Magazine* can be accessed on the VMC website www.multicultural.vic.gov.au

Social Media

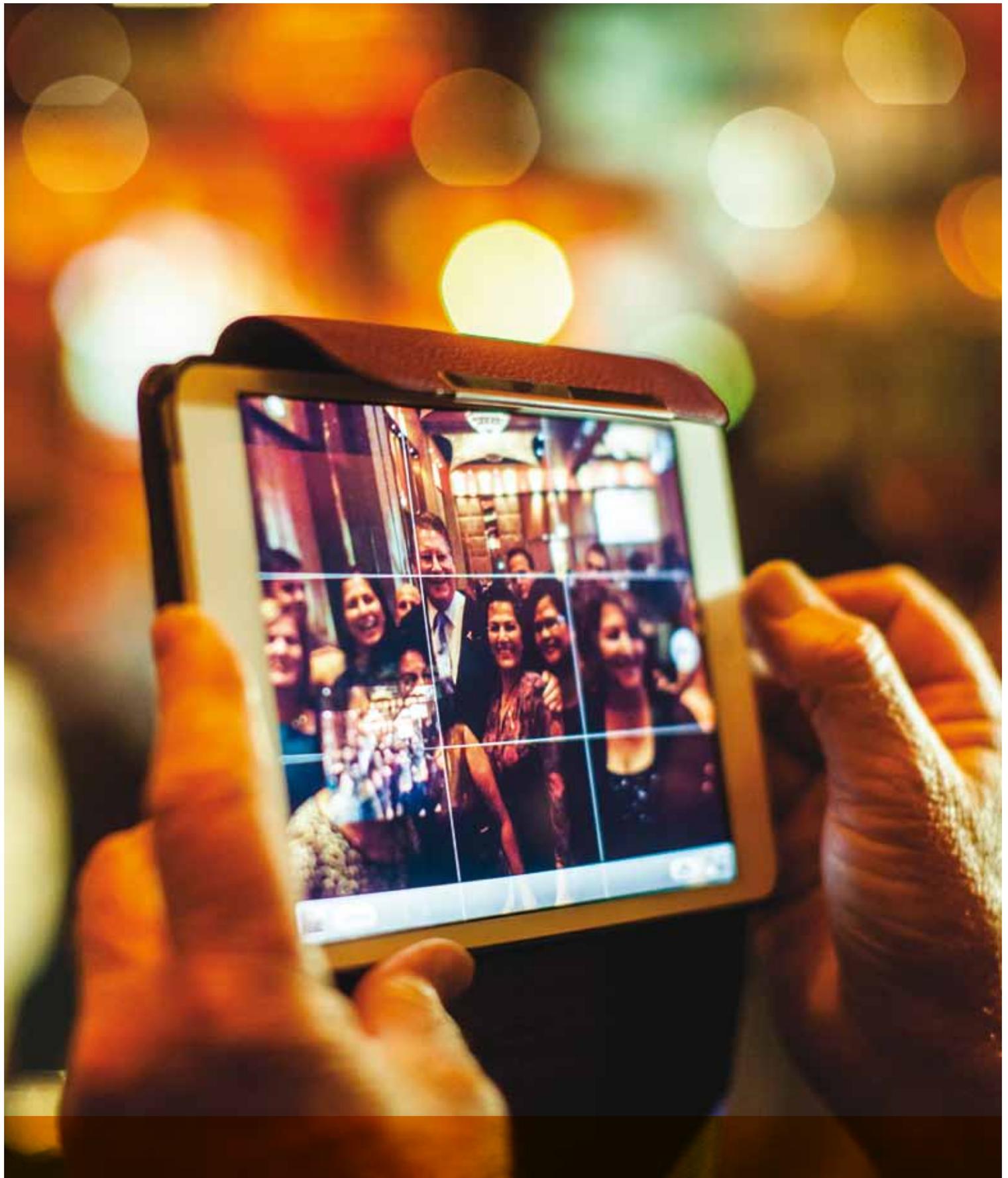
The VMC uses social media channels to communicate with multicultural communities and stakeholders.

These social media tools include:

- a Facebook page – www.facebook.com/multiculturevic
- a Twitter account – www.twitter.com/multiculturevic
- a YouTube channel – www.youtube.com/multiculturevic

The number of ‘likes’ and followers these channels have attracted has steadily increased, offering new levels of interaction and information sharing between the VMC and its many stakeholders and communities.





Premier's Gala Dinner 2013
Photographer: Jorge de Araujo

supporting Victoria's multicultural community groups and organisations

The VMC provides support to Victoria's culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse clubs and organisations, recognising the important role they play in strengthening and enhancing Victoria's multicultural community. In 2012-13, the VMC provided support through sponsorship for community events and initiatives. This is in addition to the Community Grants Program, administered by the Office of Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship from 1 July 2012 to 31 January 2013 and by the VMC from 1 February 2013 to 30 June 2013. Details of successful Community Grant recipients for 2012-13 are available at www.multicultural.vic.gov.au

The VMC managed grants include:

- Organisational Support – providing assistance for the cost of running a community organisation
- Multicultural Festivals and Events – these grants open twice a year to fund events and festivals in the following six months
- Community Language School Program – assisting new and existing schools with their running costs. This program is jointly funded with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
- Multifaith Initiatives and Interfaith Networks – supporting interfaith activities which engage the wider community
- Seniors Organisational Support – providing assistance to community organisations that have a majority of members over 60 years of age, and
- Building and Facilities Improvement – funding essential repairs and small improvements for community owned buildings.

In 2012-13, \$5.6 million was provided by the VMC through approximately 2,400 grants.

GRANTS FUNDING

The Community Grants Program is an important part of the Victorian Government's efforts to support our different cultures. Below are some examples of the activities and community groups funded through this program.

Festivals and Events

The Festivals and Events category was allocated a total of \$1.3 million in 2012-13 through two rounds.

Geelong Highland Gathering Association

The Highland Gathering 2013 held in Geelong was a Scottish Cultural fun day for the general public where people of all ages could appreciate and experience Scottish music, arts, and food. Featured at the event were pipe bands, highland dancers and games for children.

Thessaloniki Association 'The White Tower' Inc

The Thessaloniki Association celebrated 100 years of Thessaloniki independence at Melbourne's Federation Square. The event ran for an entire day and featured dancing, music, and stalls of cultural exhibits from various Greek organisations and schools. A variety of music spanned all cultures with dance groups, musicians, bands and ensembles from Greek, Russian, Indian and Yiddish/Hebrew communities.

Organisational Support

The Organisational Support category, including Senior Citizens Organisational Support, was allocated a total of \$2.4 million in 2012-13 to fund in excess of 1,400 community organisations.

Ethiopian Community Association in Victoria – Seniors Group

The Seniors Group of the Ethiopian Community Association in Victoria organised weekly English classes run by volunteers and engaged in a number of different activities including: day trips to various locations around Victoria; information days; and, Ethiopian movie viewings.

Bhutanese Organisation in Australia

The Bhutanese Organisation in Australia facilitates the settlement of new Bhutanese arrivals in Victoria by integrating new arrivals in the wider community through a well-established social network, and through organising social and cultural celebrations. Some of their activities include: youth sports; regular cultural events for seniors; ceremonies; and, trips to temples and parks.

Community Strengthening

The Community Strengthening category was allocated \$900,000 in 2012-13 supporting in excess of 300 community organisations.

The River Nile Learning Centre

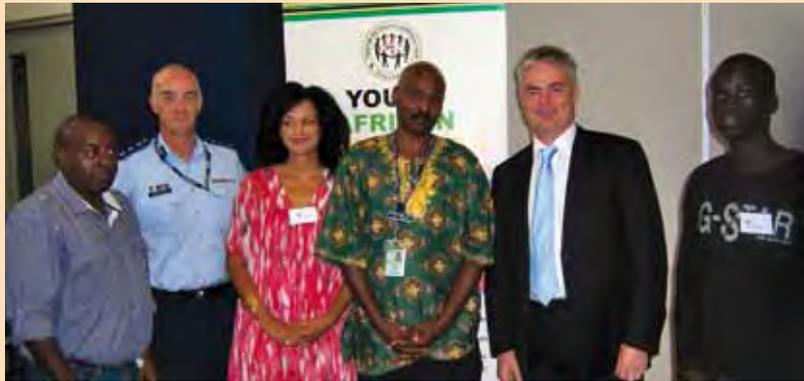
The River Nile Learning Centre organised a project to have education support aides care for the children of young refugee mothers while the women studied for their year 12 qualification. With this qualification, the women have overcome significant barriers to becoming employed and have the option of continuing their studies at the tertiary level, assisting them to live healthy, successful lives.

Museums Australia (Victoria)

The Multicultural Collections Project provides skills from professional museologists to over 50 ethnic community groups to identify, preserve and share the collections of materials that these groups have brought with them to Australia. This project ensures that future generations can learn about migration stories through cultural objects and materials.

CASE STUDY

Young African Connection – African Australian Dinner



Attendees at YAC African Australian Dinner

The Young African Connection (YAC) are a group of young African Australians who aim to foster leadership, social connection and responsibility among their peers. The YAC vision is to inclusively bring young African Australians from different backgrounds to work together to contribute to individual and community wellbeing. The YAC is working closely with many partners including African Holistic Services, Cultural Historical Association of Rodriguans and Mauritians in Victoria (CHARM) and Victoria Police.

The VMC provided a 2012-13 Multicultural Festivals and Events grant to YAC to host its first 'African Australian Dinner' in February 2013. The free dinner, held at Dandenong TAFE, featured storytelling, African music, speeches and awards and brought together elders and youth from a variety of African communities. The YAC African Australian Dinner is an event that showcases the strong commitment of those involved in creating opportunity and building leadership potential among young Africans.



Victorian Refugee Recognition Record inductee Tehiya Umer
Photographer: Shona Chong

appendix 1

REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

EASTERN METROPOLITAN	Rick Nugent	Gary Thompson
Chairperson: Huseyin Mustafa	Anne Cox	Samantha Sharp
Abhishek Vivian Prasad	Afshan Mantoo	LODDON MALLEE
Joe Guiseppe Cossari	Mohammed El-leissy	Chairperson: Phillip Bain
Theo Zographos	Mary Lalios	Peter Byrne
Umit Ugur	Arden Joseph	Dolly Gerges
Albert Fatileh	HUME	Sudesh Tiwari
Tony Chen	Chairperson: Chidambaram Srinivasan	Noemi Cummings
Emanuele Cicchiell (stood down)	Rosetta Parisotto	Mark Edwards
Chandani Deepika Kuruppu	Maria Calandro	Mary Ruane-St.Clair
Tina Stathopoulos	Barbara Brown	Nick Cavallo
Oliver Maboreke (resigned)	Jolene Barnes	Susan Denny
Celia Haddock (resigned)	Apollo Nsubuga-Kyobe	Barbara Dalloway
Nicholas Tragas (resigned)	Bernadette McCann	GIPPSLAND
SOUTHERN METROPOLITAN	Eugenie Barima	Chairperson: Elizabeth Drozd
Chairperson: Grahame J Leonard AM	Charles Halter	Soula Kanellopoulos
Kalyan Ky	Lisa Mahood	Christine Lee
Menachem Vorchheimer	Julie Soloman (resigned)	Murry Loble
Iman Riman	GRAMPIANS	Ali Khan
Birgit Goetz	Chairperson: Yasser Soliman	Abraham Maluk
Sam Navarria	Sujatha Umakanthan	Sandy Kam
Sarah Williams	Gaynor Atkin	Anna Hall
Hans Christiansen	Joshua Morris	Lisa Sinha
Rampal Reddy Muthyala	Frank Williams	Bernadette Murphy (resigned)
Kevin Ekendahl (stood down)	Mona Hatwal	Michelle Crosby
Nellie Khoroshina	Vivian Bradbury	Gregg Cook
Penny Pavlou	Dimitri Dollard	
Claude Ullin	Sundram Sivamalai	
NORTH AND WEST METROPOLITAN	Peter Appleton	
Chairperson: Jenny Matic	BARWON SOUTH WEST	
Deepak Vinayak	Chairperson: Dr Teresa De Fazio	
Ivan Chan	Helen Flanders	
Chandra Bamunusinghe	Michael Martinez	
Samli Ozturk	Viviana Golding	
Diana Krouse	Sarah Henderson (resigned)	
Jagjit Gurm	Andrew Alexander	
Walter Villagonzalo	Eddy Kontelj	

appendix 2

VICTORIA'S MULTICULTURAL AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE RECIPIENT LIST 2012

MERITORIOUS SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY AWARDS – INDIVIDUALS	Mrs Elsie Kumar	Mr Mohammad Dawood
Ms Melissa Afentoulis	Mr Yuet Lung Kwok	Mrs Senada Bosnic Ekic
Mr Hemant Amin	Ms Thoai Phan (Penny) Lam	Mr Nima Ferdowsi
Dr Gurdip Aurora	Mrs Liseby Lapierre	Mr Monib Mahdavi
Mr Angelo Ballerini	Mr Vitali Lashkariov	Mr Radhey Shyam Gupta
Mr Kyriacos Barackas	Mr Valentin Lenko	Mrs Handan Hancioglu
Mrs Doris Bugeja	Mrs Tilka Lenko	Mr Cong Lo Ho
Mrs Ana Maria Cek	Mr Mong Leung	Mr Farrukh Hussain
Mr Ngai Chung Cheng	Mr Luigi Duilio Malavisi	Mrs Maria Cam Hong Huynh
Ms Rowena Chen	Mr Steve Mangos	Ms Rosie Jurina
Ms Susan Chow	Mr Giuseppe Martello	Dr Abdul Mohaymen Kamareddine
Miss Angelina Ciavarella	Mr Constantine Mastoris	Mrs Anastasia Kordaris
Mr Mario Crisafulli	Mrs Lorraine Murray	Dr Sajeev Koshy
Mr Konstantinos Deves	Mr Long Nguyen	Mrs Rathika Mahadeva
Mr To Ha Colin Dieu	Mr Phong Nguyen	Mrs Suong Nguyen
Mrs Rosemarie Draper	Mr The-Thai Nguyen	Mr Nhan Nguyen
Mrs Madhu Dudeja	Mr James Pushparajan	Dr Manjula O'Connor
Mrs Marina Ediriweera	Mr Nabih Raffoul	Mr Kostas Paterakis
Mr Theo Emmanouilidis	Mr Sudhir Shakya	Mr Rakesh Raizada
Mr John Fenech	Mrs Anica Smdel	Mr Joseph Sakr
Mr Jacob Fronistas OAM	Ms Thien Thu	Mr Hasan Sayar
Mrs Janina Gornik	Mr Quang Khon Tran	Mr Parsuram Sharma-Luital JP
Mrs Usha Gullapalli	Mr Hoan Truong	Dr Anjali Tikoo
Mrs Helen Heath	Mrs Ingeborg van Hoek	Mrs Lucie Van Aken
Mrs Maria Henkul	Mr Salvatore Ventura	Mrs Kanela Vlahogeorgos
Mr Phu Lam Huynh	Mrs Concetta Zito	Mr Mylvaganam Wimalaswaran
Mrs Tessie MB Jordan	MERITORIOUS SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY AWARDS – ORGANISATIONS	Mr Simeon S Yang
Mr Elias Kaban	Australian and Bosnia Hercegovinian Club Brcko – Melbourne	SERVICE DELIVERY TO MULTICULTURAL VICTORIA AWARDS – ORGANISATIONS
Mrs Diana Kalimnaki	Carnatic Music Circle Melbourne	Berry Street/Sacred Heart School Fitzroy (joint project)
Mrs Voula Kanelopoulos	Greek Orthodox Community of Whittlesea Women's Group	ELF – Sudanese Play and Learn Group
Mr Constantine Karavitis JP	United Sri Lankan Muslim Association of Australia	City of Melbourne – EDGE International Student Leaders' Program
Mr Christos Kastis	The Jewish Cultural Centre and National Library 'Kadimah'	City West Water
Mr Constantinos Katsoulis	SERVICE DELIVERY TO MULTICULTURAL VICTORIA AWARDS – INDIVIDUALS	Sant Nirankari Mission
Mr Peter Kim	Rev Ronald Croxford	Humanitarian Crisis Hub
Dr Peter Kipka		Pravasa Bharathi Newspaper
Ms Nina Koutsomitis		Western Bulldogs Football Club
Mrs Maria Kulesza		Wodonga Council – Settlement Services

VICTORIA'S MULTICULTURAL AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE RECIPIENT LIST 2012 continued

PACMAC AWARDS	LOCAL GOVERNMENT AWARD	VICTORIAN MULTICULTURAL HONOUR ROLL
Sen Sgt Andrew Hives	Greater Shepparton City Council	Ms Nasro Yussf
Rabbi Meir Shlomo Klwngant	VMC AMBASSADOR AWARDS	PREMIER'S AWARD FOR COMMUNITY HARMONY
Mr Leigh Trinh	Mr Garry Kuan (Young Person)	The Huddle, North Melbourne Football Club
Con. David Attard	Mr and Mrs Azem and Jeihan Elmaz	
PSO Tong Wei	Pois'E'n Bollypop (Organisation)	
VICTORIAN MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION AWARDS	VICTORIAN MULTICULTURAL BUSINESS AWARDS	
Ms Lauren Mckeown (Individual)	Cedar Meats Australia (Marketing Award)	
Glen Waverley Primary School	Commonwealth Bank of Australia – Footscray Branch (Corporate Innovative Award)	
River Nile Learning Centre (Organisation)		

appendix 3

VICTORIAN REFUGEE RECOGNITION RECORD INDUCTEES 2013

Abuk Bol	Khem Prasad Khanal
Aliye Geleto Anota	Lensa Dinka
Andrew Kalon	Meca Ho
Augustino Moedu	Monga Mukasa
Belthrand Habiyakare	Moo Tha
Daniel Zewdu	Saveuy Mangala
Emmanuel Nagahesi	Taqi Khan
G-Storm and Fablice	Tehiya Umer
Hser Wah Pokyaut	Tereza Gum
Jouana Assadi	Thamaypaw Naysay
Kabir Mohammad	Yasmin Hassen
Kaw Doh Htoo	

Level 3, 3 Treasury Place, Melbourne, Victoria 3002
TELEPHONE (03) 9651 0651 **FACSIMILE** (03) 9651 0612 **EMAIL** info@vmc.vic.gov.au **WEB** multicultural.vic.gov.au

