



# Victorian Multicultural Commission

Annual Report 2017–2018

Turkish Cypriot Folk Dancers at the Premier's Gala Dinner, March 2018



# Letter to the Minister



Robin Scott MP  
Minister for Multicultural Affairs  
Level 5, 1 Macarthur Street  
East Melbourne VIC 3002

Dear Minister,

In accordance with Section 21 of the *Multicultural Victoria Act 2011*, I have great pleasure in reporting on the Victorian Multicultural Commission's operations for the period 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Helen Kapalos". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the letter "s".

Helen Kapalos  
Chairperson

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Baker Boy at the Premier's  
Gala Dinner, March 2018

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# Chairperson's Report

The Victorian Multicultural Commission is a statutory authority which is the primary conduit between multicultural communities and the state government on multicultural affairs.

Importantly, the Commission is also a trusted conduit for communities who rely on its independence to deliver fair and equitable outcomes for the community it serves.

Victoria's society is recognised and valued for its vibrant multicultural identity, and the success of how its culturally diverse communities come together is evident in the social, physical and economic landscape of our towns, cities and our population.

Our diverse society doesn't just exist – it thrives. But multiculturalism and managing diversity in these times is not without its challenges and a significant part of our role is to promote and champion the value that diversity brings.

Our annual report is a chance to reflect and review how we served our communities over the past 12 months; what we did well, and what we can do better. As you will see, our remit is large, covering engagement, advocacy, promotion of multiculturalism, and ultimately an overarching aim to foster the best outcomes we can for all.

In the past 12 months we have again delivered the state's largest multicultural celebration – Cultural Diversity Week – together with its various events including the Premier's Gala Dinner, Victoria's Multicultural Festival and the Culture Waves concert. The VMC Film Festival received more than 70 entries from aspiring filmmakers, with winners selected by industry experts.

The celebrations honoured our 'Proud to Belong' theme and our flagship publication of the same name, paying tribute to the wide-ranging contributions multicultural Victorians have made to our state. Borne from the palpable pride felt by the newest Victorians at citizenship ceremonies, the 'Proud to Belong' theme was so successful at galvanising broad support for diversity and inclusion that it will be extended into 2018-19.

Over the past year we have also built upon the expansive expertise of our Commissioners, strengthening their facilitation and communications skills to help the Commission to better understand the needs of our communities, and to communicate to others how we're responding to and addressing these concerns.

In 2017-18, the Commission addressed community concerns by making submissions on government policy in the areas of aged care, career advice in schools, drug law reform, freedom of religion, migration intake, the future of work and workers, and visa cancellations.

And of course we are committed to undertaking a wide range of other courageous advocacy for our communities on the issues that matter most to them.

We had a jam-packed year of events, online and traditional media coverage, and intercultural mediation, advice, networking and facilitation.

We also encouraged our networks to engage more broadly, through the development of our Civic Participation Kit. Civic engagement is our core business, and by sharing our knowledge with decision-makers to help them engage diverse communities in consultations, we hope to inform more inclusive policy and forge stronger community links.

We were also extremely proud to launch our Multicultural Champions program this year. The Champions showcase the existing and wide-ranging support for our state's diverse communities – through industry, government, non-government, volunteering and community work. The program supports these inspiring individuals by helping them expand their networks, link different networks interculturally, and especially through building community capacity.

We are also proud to have done the groundwork on a media internship program for multicultural communities with the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, which will be launched in 2018-19. This is an important step towards making newsrooms truly reflective of the diverse communities they serve.

We thank you for taking the time to enjoy our annual reflection, and encourage you to get involved in celebrating and advocating this state's multiculturalism – it is a crucial and spirited endeavour and one that is best achieved in partnership.

**Helen Kapalos**  
Chairperson

# The Year in Numbers

6,385,800

people in Victoria

49%

born overseas or has a parent born overseas

247

countries of birth

26%

speak a language other than English at home

234

languages

135

religions

10

policy submissions

3

major publications and reports

19

Multicultural Champions appointed

11

representatives at inaugural Multicultural Chamber of Commerce Group meeting

1,400

guests at the Cultural Diversity Week Premier's Gala Dinner

35,000

people at Victoria's Multicultural Festival (despite the rain!)

60

recipients of Victoria's Multicultural Awards for Excellence

more than 70

entries in the VMC Film festival

\$248,000

in Community Support Fund grants

42

projects funded

\$293,000

VMC 2017-18 budget

553

meetings and events attended by Chairperson

700

meetings and events attended by Commissioners

3

new Commissioners

10

Commission meetings

8

Regional Advisory Councils (RACs)

158

RAC members

14

RAC meetings and community conversations

350

approximately community members attended community conversations

# Our Role

## What does the Victorian Multicultural Commission do?

The Victorian Multicultural Commission (VMC) was established in 1983 and is the voice of Victoria's culturally and linguistically diverse communities. Informed by grassroots consultations and a network of Regional Advisory Councils, the VMC advocates to all levels of government, links multicultural communities with services, and hosts events that showcase and promote our state's vibrant cultural diversity.

## Relationship to Government

As an independent statutory authority, the VMC provides impartial advice to government on policies and programs that are relevant to multicultural communities. This includes a wide range of matters such as employment, education, social cohesion, law and justice, drugs and alcohol, youth matters, family violence, aged care, mental health, transport, public safety, settlement, housing and health.

The VMC is supported by its secretariat, the Office of the Victorian Multicultural Commission, as well as the Multicultural Affairs and Social Cohesion Division at the Department of Premier and Cabinet.

*"I always believe in one slogan – many communities, one humanity. That's my multiculturalism."*

**Neeraj Nanda, VMC Multicultural Champion,  
Editor of Melbourne's South Asia Times**  
*(Read more about the Multicultural Champions program on page 29)*



L2R dance group at Victoria's Multicultural Festival, March 2018



VMC Commissioners portrait from the *Proud To Belong* publication

## Our Commissioners

The VMC comprises 12 Commissioners with a wide range of professional and cultural backgrounds. Commissioners meet monthly, as well as attending community events on behalf of the VMC, chairing the VMC's Regional Advisory Councils, and participating in other meetings and events on an ad-hoc basis.

Commissioners are appointed for terms of up to four years, with the exception of the Youth Commissioner and Community Representative Commissioner (a position which is filled upon nomination by the Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria), who are appointed for terms of up to two years. The role of Chairperson is full-time, while all other roles are part-time.

### Helen Kapalos, Chairperson

**Current term: August 2015 to August 2019**

**First appointed: August 2015**

An accomplished journalist, presenter, executive producer and filmmaker, Helen Kapalos has chaired the VMC since 2015. In this time, she has driven a series of new initiatives advocating for equality and celebrating Victoria's diversity. These have included redefining the VMC's approach to community engagement, establishing new platforms for youth leadership, implementing culturally specific initiatives to combat family violence, championing better settlement outcomes for Victoria's newly arrived residents, and elevating the public discourse on identity politics and inclusion.

Helen's successful media career as an award-winning journalist has included working for all three Australian commercial television networks as well as the two public broadcasters. In 2015, prior to joining the VMC, she directed and produced a feature-length documentary on the medicinal cannabis debate, *A Life of Its Own*, which has aired on SBS and Netflix in Australia, the UK and the US, as well as film festivals across Australia.

Helen recently joined Domestic Violence Victoria as a Director, and has a directorship with the newly formed Usman Khawaja Foundation. She remains an Ambassador for both the Ovarian Cancer Research Foundation and Community Languages Australia.

### Ross Alatsas, Deputy Chairperson

**Current term: November 2017 to August 2019**

**(Acting Chairperson April-August 2015)**

**First appointed: September 2011**

Ross Alatsas has a long history of involvement in Victoria's Greek and wider multicultural communities, having been General Manager of the Greek Media Group since 1997. He has been involved with various committees and advisory councils promoting Victoria's cultural diversity, including the steering committee for the Asian Football League's 2015 Asian Cup. Ross assisted in the establishment of Victoria's first 24-hour Chinese radio station, 3CW, and also served as a member of the business advisory council for community television station, C31. Among Ross' achievements in his time on the VMC is his initiation of the establishment of the Multicultural Chamber of Commerce Group (see page 26), which he chairs.

### Sam Almaliki

**Current term: December 2015 to August 2019**

**First appointed: December 2015**

**Chairperson, Loddon Mallee Regional Advisory Council**

Sam Almaliki is a business leader with expertise in the sporting, start-up, corporate, and not-for-profit sectors. He is Managing Director of the consultancy Activate Global, which provides business strategy, customer insights and marketing advice to a range of clients. He was previously the head of community engagement at Cricket Australia where he expanded the diversity of people participating in cricket to record levels. Sam is also Chairperson of the Caulfield Racecourse Reserve Trust and a member of the ABC Advisory Council. He is an avid reader, enthusiastic walker, arts admirer and a lifelong sporting tragic.

### Sisay Dinku

**Current term: May 2017 to August 2019**

**First appointed: May 2017**

**Chairperson, Northern and Western Metropolitan Regional Advisory Council**

Sisay Dinku has been widely engaged in community development in the African Australian diaspora and the broader multicultural community in Victoria. He is a founding member of the Celebrate African Australians awards program, an AFL Multicultural Community Ambassador and Chairperson of the African Union Delegates Liaison. He is also a Director at Multicultural Consulting Services and serves on the board of the charity Australian Books for Children of Africa. Sisay has managed and worked on a number of programs to assist new migrants to compete in the local labour market – especially in industries experiencing skills shortages – through job search plans, Australian work culture orientations and employability skills training.

### Tina Hosseini

**Current term: October 2017 to August 2021**

**First appointed: October 2015**

**Chairperson, Eastern Metropolitan Regional Advisory Council**

Tina Hosseini is a researcher at Deakin University who is currently working on a prevention-based adolescent health project. She is an active member of the Victorian Red Cross board and the Iranian Women's Association, and more recently joined Deakin's cultural diversity and inclusion working group and the City Local Learning and Employment Network. She originally joined the VMC as Youth Commissioner, having been a member of the Multicultural Youth Network and holding youth leadership roles at the Red Cross, the Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia and Spectrum Migrant Resource Centre. Tina completed a research-based Master of Science at the University of Melbourne with a focus on fetal physiology.

### Walter Rapoport

**Current term: November 2017 to August 2021**

**First appointed: November 2017**

**Chairperson, Southern Metropolitan Regional Advisory Council**

Walter Rapoport is a former Chairperson of the Council of Christians and Jews (Victoria) and edited the Council's annual journal, *Gesher*, from

2013 to 2016. Walter has had a long and abiding interest in interfaith and intercultural engagement and served as the inaugural Chairman of the interfaith relations committee of the B'nai B'rith Anti-Defamation Commission, an Australian organisation dedicated to combatting anti-Semitism and all other forms of racism and hatred. He also chaired the steering committees of two projects delivered under the Commonwealth Government's Living in Harmony grants program, 'Building Bridges' and 'Embracing Youth'. He is co-founder and joint-CEO of a finance company.

#### **Dr Sundram Sivamalai**

**Current term: November 2017 to August 2019**

**First appointed: October 2015**

**Community Representative Commissioner**

Dr Sundram Sivamalai is Deputy Chairperson of the Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria (ECCV), and was nominated by the ECCV to the role of Community Representative Commissioner on the VMC. Based in Ballarat, Sundram has applied his extensive experience in public health to a range of local, state and national board appointments, covering issues such as responsible gambling, medical research and mental health. Born in Malaysia, Sundram maintains a keen interest in the Malay language as well as his native tongue, Tamil,

while also learning Japanese, Vietnamese and Hindi. Sundram was awarded the Australian Government's Centenary Medal for his work with migrants.

#### **Tsebin Tchen**

**Current term: October 2015 to August 2019**

**First appointed: October 2015**

**Chairperson, Gippsland Regional Advisory Council**

Tsebin Tchen has extensive community, public sector and political experience. As a federal senator for Victoria from 1999 to 2005, he was the first Asian migrant to be elected to the Australian Parliament. Tsebin has more than 40 years of voluntary community involvement and advocacy experience, supporting a wide range of Chinese and other community groups. Prior to his election to the Senate he was a member of the Victorian Anti-Discrimination Tribunal. Tsebin describes himself as an accidental but assertive believer in the values and principles of multiculturalism and is also a member of the Australian Multicultural Council.



Dr Mimmie Claudine Ngum Chi Watts at a Regional Advisory Council meeting for Hume, October 2017

### Sonia Vignjevic

**Current term: October 2015 to August 2019**

**First appointed: October 2015**

**Chairperson, Grampians Regional Advisory Council**

Sonia Vignjevic is an executive director with significant experience in the multicultural, migration and settlement sectors. She currently works at Settlement Services International and has previously held executive positions at the Eastern Community Legal Centre, South East Community Links, Anglicare Victoria and the Australian Red Cross. Sonia holds a Bachelor of Arts with a major in psychology and human movement, a Graduate Diploma in International Law, a Post Graduate Certificate in Trauma Counselling and Psychotherapy, and is an Australian Registered Migration Agent. Sonia actively volunteers in her community as well as with Refugee Legal.

### Dr Mimmie Claudine Ngum Chi Watts

**Current term: October 2015 to August 2019**

**First appointed: October 2015**

**Chairperson, Hume Regional Advisory Council**

Dr Mimmie Watts is an academic, advocate and public health expert. She is the academic lead consultant for VMware in the USA for Africa. Mimmie has been involved in various state and national initiatives including the implementation of the Victorian Government's first Sexual and Reproductive Health Plan and federal government initiatives to prevent female genital mutilation. Mimmie is Deputy Chairperson of Women's Health West and sits on AMES Australia's Board of Directors. She chairs the Australian African Academic Network and the African Diaspora Women Summit Committee and is a former Western Health Board Director.

She recently authored the book *Sahara, Piercing the Thatch Ceiling*, that tells the story of a migrant woman through a gender, intersectionality and intercultural lens. Mimmie is an Honorary Professor of Public Health at Mekele University.

### Rosaria Zarro

**Current term: November 2017 to August 2021**

**First appointed: November 2017**

**Chairperson, Barwon South West Regional Advisory Council**

Rosaria Zarro has been an educator for the past 17 years, with experience teaching Italian, science and history in government schools and cultural organisations. She has worked for Museum Victoria, Museo Italiano and the State Library of Victoria to produce and deliver education programs based around their exhibitions and collections. Rosaria has delivered many innovative programs in the Italian language at the Melbourne Museum, Immigration Museum and Scienceworks and more recently has worked on the development of programs and resources in French, Spanish and Japanese. She continues to teach in a school as well as coordinating a student exchange for students in Italy.

### Youth Commissioner

**Vacant**

The VMC is currently recruiting a new Youth Commissioner following the resignation of Sukhjot Kaur Khalsa.

# Meeting our Objectives

The VMC's objectives are set out in Section 7 of the *Multicultural Victoria Act 2011*. This report highlights a range of activities undertaken in 2017-18 towards the achievement of the VMC's ten objectives.

## OBJECTIVE 1 (Page 14)

Promote full participation by Victoria's diverse communities in the social, cultural, economic and political life of Victoria.

## OBJECTIVE 6 (Page 23)

Promote a better understanding of Victoria's diverse communities.

## OBJECTIVE 2 (Page 20)

Promote access by Victoria's diverse communities to services made available by governments and other bodies.

## OBJECTIVE 7 (Page 23)

Promote interaction between individuals and communities from diverse backgrounds.

## OBJECTIVE 3 (Page 21)

Encourage all of Victoria's diverse communities to retain and express their social identity and cultural inheritance and to promote mutual respect.

## OBJECTIVE 8 (Page 26)

Promote the social, cultural and economic benefits of diversity.

## OBJECTIVE 4 (Page 22)

Promote cooperation between bodies concerned with multicultural affairs and diversity.

## OBJECTIVE 9 (Page 28)

Promote the rights and responsibilities of citizenship as a unifying force that strengthens our diverse multicultural community.

## OBJECTIVE 5 (Page 23)

Promote unity, understanding and harmony among Victoria's diverse communities.

## OBJECTIVE 10 (Page 29)

Promote community service as a principle that builds a stronger society.

# Promoting Participation

## OBJECTIVE 1

Promote full participation by Victoria's diverse communities in the social, cultural, economic and political life of Victoria.

### Cultural Diversity Week 2018

Cultural Diversity Week 2018 marked the 16th year that Victorians have come together for the week-long celebration of the state's vibrant and diverse cultures.

Complementing the VMC's flagship publication of the same name (see page 25), the theme for the week was 'Proud to Belong'. The theme provided a glimpse into some of the contributions culturally and linguistically diverse Victorians are making to the state, and a chance to reflect on the important role we all play in ensuring our communities are welcoming and inclusive.

Held from 17 to 25 March, Cultural Diversity Week coincided with the United Nations Day for the

Elimination of Racial Discrimination – commonly known as Harmony Day – on 21 March.

In partnership with the Victorian Government, the VMC presented and supported a range of events to highlight the diverse sights, sounds and tastes that people from all over the world have brought to Victoria.

### Premier's Gala Dinner

The Premier's Gala Dinner officially launched Cultural Diversity Week on Saturday 17 March and was attended by 1,400 people, including representatives from 43 different cultural and faith groups.

Held at the Melbourne Exhibition and Convention Centre, the gala featured a wide variety of cultural entertainment including: Baker Boy, the CaribVic Carnival dancers, St Paul's Lutheran Choir, Gawurra, the Turkish Cypriot Folk Dancers, Charlie Lim, Ignite Bollywood, Aphrodescia, Asanti Dance Theatre, Zaffet Royale, the Phil Ceberano Band, and NEDA – All Colour Project.



AFL and VFL Multicultural Ambassadors Reuben William, Akec Makur Chuot and Goy Lok after participating in Turban Tying at Victoria's Multicultural Festival, March 2018



The Welcome Dinner Project – a partnership event between the VMC, Melbourne Food and Wine Festival and Joining the Dots for Cultural Diversity Week, March 2018

### Victoria’s Multicultural Festival and Culture Waves concert

The Multicultural Festival took place at Federation Square on Saturday 24 March and was attended by 35,000 people, despite the less-than-favourable weather. The free event included food and market stalls, live music and dance, as well as interactive activities like tai chi and turban tying.

This year’s festival line-up included Nhatty Man and Gara, San Lazaro and Maribelle. The Culture Bites food precinct offered patrons the choice between Cuban, Korean, Indian, Spanish, Peruvian, Hmong, Indonesian, Chinese, Croatian, Moroccan, East African, German and Greek cuisines. The kids zone offered activities including Colombian face painting and African storytelling, as well as the screening and award ceremony for the Primary School Short Film Competition.

In the evening, the VMC staged the second Culture Waves concert for young Victorians, which featured Kira Puru, Sampa the Great and Philly.

### VMC Film Festival

The second VMC Film Festival invited filmmakers to share their perspectives on multiculturalism through the power of film and explore the theme ‘My Generation, My Story’.

More than 70 entries were received, with judges selecting a shortlist of 13.

The diverse themes and empowering perspectives of shortlisted films ranged from discrimination in the screen industry to the cultural bonds between generations, and from Anglo-centric beauty standards to the experiences of transgender Aboriginal young people. The 13 shortlisted films were screened at a special event at ACMI on 24 May 2018.

Presented in partnership with Swinburne University of Technology, the festival was attended by dozens of young, talented filmmakers, a range of guests from the film industry, supporters of the VMC and Cultural Diversity Week sponsors.

Leading filmmakers Sue Maslin, Richard Keddie and Alkinos Tsilimidos presented awards to recognise the inspirational work of the following filmmakers:

- ▶ **UNDER 25 WINNER:** *Frizz* – Written, directed and produced by Ivy Mutuku
- ▶ **OVER 25 WINNER:** *Brotherboy* – Written, directed and produced by Charlotte de la Fuente
- ▶ **JUDGES’ AWARD:** *Romeo is Not The Only Fruit: A Documentary* – Directed by Aydin Bozkurt and written and produced by Tiffanie-Jowie Liew



John's Story screening at the VMC Film Festival, May 2018

- ▶ **ENCOURAGEMENT AWARD:** *Outcasting* – Directed by Natalia Chernaya and Vanessa Crouch, written by Natalia Chernaya and Christine Gjelstrup and produced by Natalia Chernaya, Katherine Graham and Christine Gjelstrup
- ▶ **PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARD:** *You Know What? I Love You* – Written, directed and produced by Natalie Cunningham

Following the festival, the Immigration Museum offered special free screenings of the shortlisted films over a June weekend.

### Community Events

The VMC also actively encouraged the community to host their own celebrations. Ninety events from across the state were registered and promoted on the Cultural Diversity Week website, including art exhibitions, discussion forums, sporting events, community meals and performances. The events ranged from African drumming lessons at Hampton Library, to Dragonboating at Docklands, to a Harmony Festival in Ballarat.

### Voices from around the State

The VMC is advised by eight Regional Advisory Councils covering the whole of Victoria. Council members are the VMC's eyes and ears on the ground, keeping Commissioners and the Victorian Government well informed about the issues that matter to our state's multicultural communities. The valuable information they provide is used in the development of policy, legislation and improved government and community services.

Council members are selected through a public expression-of-interest process. They come from 36 different cultural backgrounds and include community members, service providers, local business owners and local government representatives.



Regional Advisory Councils assist the VMC to identify local opportunities for multicultural community members. The councils are also a useful forum for other organisations and government bodies to engage with localised multicultural communities. For example, Victoria Police representatives regularly attend council meetings, sharing valuable information and listening to community perspectives in a two-way ongoing exchange.

Matters raised by the Regional Advisory Councils are collated into a report to the Minister for Multicultural Affairs.

### Community Conversations

Consulting Victoria's multicultural communities on a regular basis is an important key function of the VMC. Promoting greater intercultural understanding and access to government services are statutory objectives which the VMC fulfils. We have gone directly to communities for more than 30 years to listen to their views and ideas and to take these to government to inform service delivery and policy and program development.

In 2017-18 the VMC conducted a broad range of discussions and "community conversations" across the state. During the course of the 14 consultations we spoke with Syrian, Iraqi and Afghan people in Geelong; Burundian, Hazara

and Vietnamese people in Mildura; Chinese and Burmese people in Box Hill; and many Victorians with African heritage including South Sudanese, Somalis, Congolese and Eritreans. The broad cultural diversity of Victoria was represented at these community conversations with approximately 350 people with more than 40 different ancestries taking part.

The community conversations were based around three inter-connecting themes – employment, mental health and housing. Participants were also given a chance to raise other issues of importance to them, with access to education, transport, settlement and other services, media, and family violence all raised and discussed.

These community conversations attracted a large cohort of new Victorians who have provided the VMC with important information about their settlement experiences. They contributed useful insights on how, while many are improving their English, they face daily challenges when seeking housing and employment.

Consultations such as these are a key way the VMC is assisting multicultural communities to be heard by government. An analysis of all matters raised will be compiled into a briefing for the Minister for Multicultural Affairs and a more comprehensive report will form the evidence base for policy and program development.



Regional Advisory Council meeting for the North West region, November 2017

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“Fantastic approach – coming to the regions and hearing our perspectives. We definitely felt heard.”

Wodonga community conversation participant

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“I came to [a] conversation last week it was so great I had to come again.”

Darebin community conversation participant

### Career Advice in Victorian Schools

A Victorian Government inquiry is currently examining the relationship between career advice and the workforce participation of young Victorians, and whether the current approach to career advice is meeting the needs of school leavers. The VMC made a submission to this

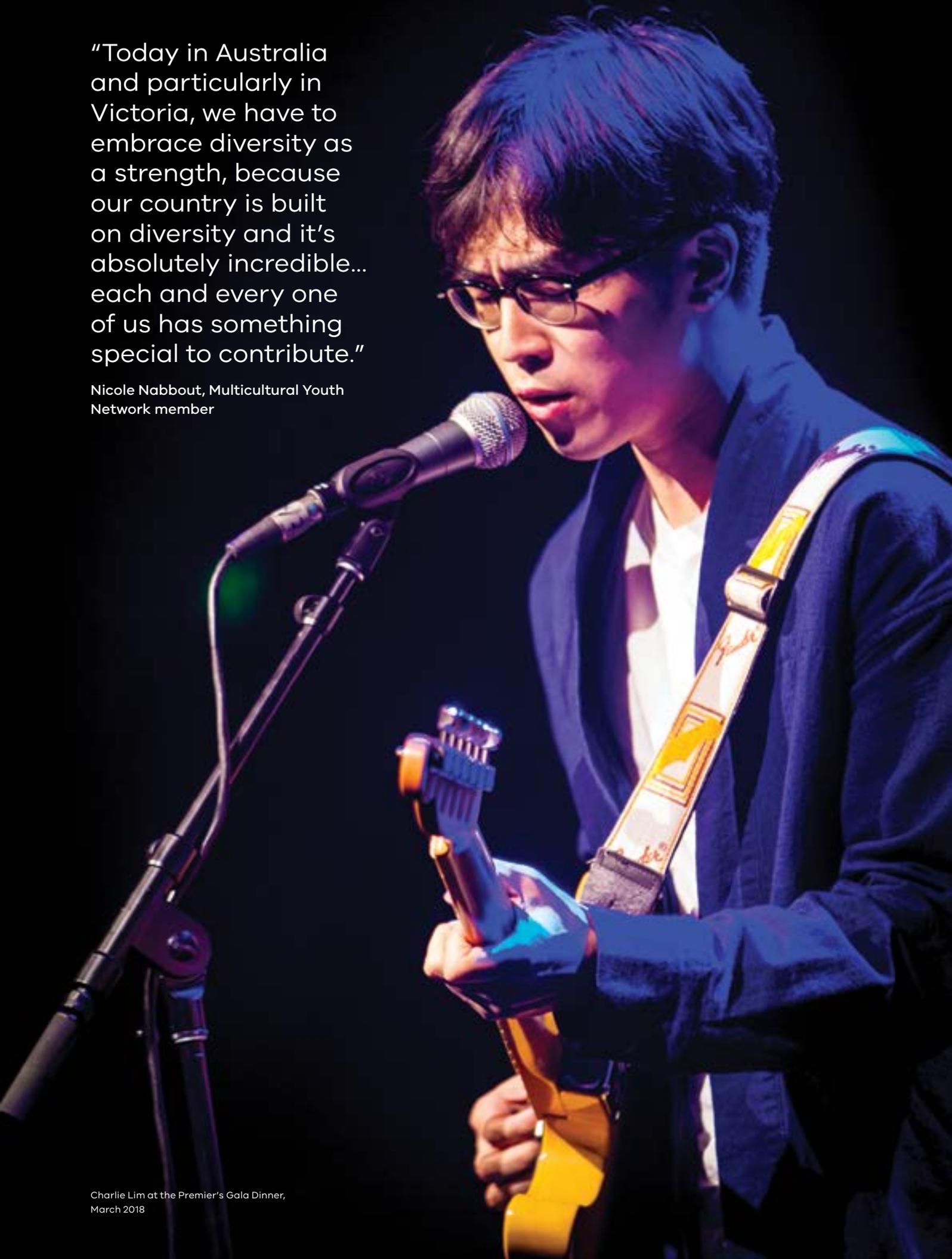
inquiry which was informed by members – in particular young members – of the VMC’s Regional Advisory Councils. The submission also drew on information that the VMC had previously gathered in consultations with young people, as reported in the VMC’s 2015 publication, *Engaging Our Youth, Our Future*.

The VMC’s submission focussed on the career advice needs of students from culturally diverse backgrounds, and in particular the need for more tailored advice. The VMC advocated for cultural competency training for career advisers and the collection of culturally-specific data to assist them to develop appropriate activities for this cohort. The Victorian Government tabled the final report in Parliament on 22 August 2018.



"Today in Australia and particularly in Victoria, we have to embrace diversity as a strength, because our country is built on diversity and it's absolutely incredible... each and every one of us has something special to contribute."

Nicole Nabbout, Multicultural Youth Network member



# Accessible Services

## OBJECTIVE 2

Promote access by Victoria's diverse communities to services made available by governments and other bodies.

### VCAT Online Dispute Resolution Pilot

The VMC has been collaborating with the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) since 2016 to improve its customer service and access to justice for culturally diverse applicants and respondents. As a result of this ongoing engagement, VCAT invited the VMC's input into planning for an online dispute resolution pilot, which aims to make it simpler and more affordable to resolve small civil claims. The VMC has expressed support for the initiative and has advised VCAT on ways that online dispute resolution could be more accessible to multicultural clients.

### Drug Law Reform

A Victorian Government inquiry into drug law reform investigated the effectiveness of drug control laws and procedures in minimising drug-related harms. It explored the areas of prevention, law enforcement, treatment and harm reduction. The VMC's submission to the inquiry was structured around themes of public health approaches, settlement effects, access to treatment and support services, and research gaps. This included highlighting the need to build effective, culturally responsive services and approaches.

The submission resulted in an opportunity to speak at a public hearing in September 2017. Commissioners Sonia Vignjevic and Tina Hosseini attended and emphasised the lack of data available on culturally diverse communities and illicit drug use, as well as the lack of take-up of interpreters in rehabilitation centres.

### Quality of Aged Care

The VMC responded to a Commonwealth inquiry into the quality of care in residential aged care facilities in Australia, emphasising the considerable work necessary to improve the care provided to multicultural older Australians. These individuals, both aged and diverse, comprise one of the most vulnerable sections of the Australian community.

The VMC advocated for equipping all residential aged care facilities to cater for people from non-English speaking backgrounds through the provision of bilingual staff, interpreter services and translated written materials. The VMC also advocated for appropriate cultural competency training for all aged care workers employed in residential aged care facilities. The VMC presented at a public hearing in Melbourne in March 2018 to further inform the inquiry.

### The Justice Project

In October, the VMC submitted to the Law Council of Australia's (LCA) Justice Project. This submission built on earlier work including Understanding and use of Power of Attorney in Victoria's CALD Communities (2015) and the VMC's submission to the 2015-2016 Victorian Government Review of Access to Justice.

Looking at the justice system from the people's point of view, the Justice Project focused on justice barriers facing culturally and linguistically diverse groups among others, and considered what works to reduce those barriers. The VMC's submission, informed by regional advisory council members and local community members, sought to inform the Project by providing the LCA with examples of people's lived experience together with recommendations to address the barriers.

This included support for research and data gathering to address severe gaps in the information and evidence bases, and a recommendation that going directly to communities would result in rich and illuminating information to better inform solutions.

# Cultural Expression

## OBJECTIVE 3

Encourage all of Victoria's diverse communities to retain and express their social identity and cultural inheritance and to promote mutual respect.

### Community Support Fund

The Community Support Fund provided more than \$245,000 to programs for culturally diverse communities in 2017-18. The fund exists to address urgent needs or to finance activities which fall outside of the scope of the Victorian Government's Community Grants Program (see page 26).

Initiatives funded include:

- ▶ A women's leadership forum run by the African-Australian Women's Advocacy Group

- ▶ A cultural concert by the Victorian chapter of the Vietnamese Community in Australia
- ▶ Preparation of a community action plan by the Board of Imams of Victoria
- ▶ Activities for the Mildura Interfaith Women's Group

More than \$56,000 of the Community Support Fund went towards the development of a new multicultural internship initiative with the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, in partnership with the Victorian Government and the Australian Film, Television and Radio School (see page 29). This initiative will be implemented in 2018-19.

For the full list of 2017-18 Community Support Fund recipients, please see Appendix 1.



African-Australian Women's Advocacy Group women's leadership forum, September 2017

# Cooperation and Coordination

## OBJECTIVE 4

Promote cooperation between bodies concerned with multicultural affairs and diversity.

### Multifaith Advisory Group

The Multifaith Advisory Group is chaired by the VMC Chairperson and comprises 27 religious leaders from various Christian, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, Sikh, Jewish and Baha'i communities.

The group assists the Victorian Government to understand and appropriately respond to faith-related issues in Victoria, and to support people from a diverse array of cultural and religious backgrounds.

In 2017-18, the Multifaith Advisory Group continued to play a strong role in advising the Victorian Government on family violence policy, including forced marriage and human trafficking. For example, in March 2018, the group provided feedback to the Department of Justice and Regulation on the implementation of

Recommendation 156 of the Royal Commission into Family Violence. The recommendation proposed that forced marriage and dowry-related abuse be classified as family violence under the *Family Violence Protection Act 2008*.

In 2017-18, the Multifaith Advisory Group's family violence working group developed a participatory action research project to respond to two other recommendations of the Royal Commission into Family Violence (Recommendations 163 and 165). The research project, which is set to launch in July 2018, will:

- ▶ establish a base of national and international evidence of practices that build the capacity of faith leaders and communities to respond to and prevent family violence and violence against women, and
- ▶ support selected faith communities to design and implement pilot projects that draw on the evidence base to address their specific needs.

The University of Melbourne and the Multicultural Centre for Women's Health have been contracted to drive the research project in collaboration with the Multifaith Advisory Group.



The Multifaith Advisory Group with Premier Daniel Andrews, Minister for Multicultural Affairs Robin Scott and VMC Chairperson Helen Kapalos, 2018

# Intercultural Harmony

## OBJECTIVE 5

Promote unity, understanding and harmony among Victoria's diverse communities.

## OBJECTIVE 6

Promote a better understanding of Victoria's diverse communities.

## OBJECTIVE 7

Promote interaction between individuals and communities from diverse backgrounds.



### VMC Civic Participation Kit

Community engagement is the heart of what the VMC does. It is an opportunity to build capacity and social capital in local communities by involving them in decision-making and considering their particular needs. In appreciation of the VMC's expertise in this area, the Victorian Premier asked the VMC to undertake a research project into community attitudes following the backlash against a proposal to build a new mosque in Bendigo in 2015.

In June 2017 the VMC released the research study, *Social Cohesion in Bendigo: Understanding Community Attitudes to the Mosque in 2015*. In November 2017 the research study received a state award for excellence from the Planning Institute of Australia (PIA) as well as a national PIA commendation in 2018.

To further foster intercultural understanding and to promote interaction between decision-makers and multicultural community members, the VMC developed a Civic Participation Kit in consultation with the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV). The kit was released and presented at the MAV

Rural and Regional Conference in Shepparton in May 2018, where it was well received and has since been distributed to all Victorian councils.

### Freedom of Religion

In promoting unity and better understanding of our diverse communities, the VMC endeavours to challenge racist and faith related incidents which infringe upon people's human rights. The VMC does this by conducting research and submitting to inquiries to inform policy development, and by engaging in public discourse to counter the narratives of religious vilification.

A Commonwealth inquiry into the status of the human right to religion or belief has been underway since November 2016. The VMC submitted to the inquiry in April 2017. Following the submission, Victoria's Multifaith Advisory Group – which is chaired by the VMC Chairperson – was invited to appear before an expert panel as part of the inquiry in February 2018.

The VMC also attended a public hearing in April 2018 and advised the inquiry that multiculturalism has not only withstood the test of time in Australia when other nations have struggled to embrace

newcomers, but has been resilient as a socially progressive policy that promotes rights and responsibilities. As a result, the VMC suggested that multiculturalism offers strong leverage to extend human rights norms and the means to promote the dialogue of inclusion and belonging.

### Managing Australia's Migrant Intake

The VMC submitted to the Commonwealth Department of Home Affairs' discussion paper about Australia's 2018-19 permanent migration program. The migration program is planned and managed annually, and announced in May each year as part of the Australian Government Budget. To inform migration numbers under the program, the Department of Home Affairs undertakes consultations with state and federal government agencies, business and industry stakeholders, and the Australian public, and considers both short and long-term factors.

To position Australia as a destination of choice, the VMC recommended that the Department ensure the planned migration program be responsive to global events and trends, such as emerging geopolitical influences and the global employment environment. The VMC also recommended that the program offer greater flexibility, with opportunities for settlement in regional Australia to ease environmental and infrastructure pressures in metropolitan centres.

### Future of Work and Workers

The VMC submitted to a Commonwealth inquiry into the impact of technological and other change on the future of work and workers in Australia. The VMC's submission was informed by its consultation findings and stakeholder engagement, Regional Advisory Council members, VMC Commissioners and VMC research projects.

The VMC advised the inquiry of the significant barriers to employment faced by job seekers from culturally diverse backgrounds. These include discrimination (e.g. names on resumes as a barrier to being duly considered), non-recognition of qualifications and skills, English language skills, and a lack of Australian work experience. Culturally diverse communities are overrepresented in insecure, low-skill, low-wage employment in Australia, despite many having substantial educational qualifications, experience and skills.

The VMC advocated for proper supports to enable people from culturally diverse backgrounds to access jobs in industries that are expected to grow and offer future employment, and for regular audits of employers in relation to workplace law compliance. The committee conducting the inquiry is expected to hand down its final report in September 2018.

### Visa Cancellations made on Criminal Grounds

The Commonwealth Joint Standing Committee on Migration was asked to examine the review processes associated with visa cancellations made on criminal grounds, including the scope of the Administrative Appeals Tribunal's jurisdiction to review ministerial decisions.

The VMC's submission expressed concerns that managed migration is effectively being replaced with a risk management approach; where the former focus of nation building is replaced with emphasis on compliance and enforcement aimed at border protection and national security. However, the main focus of the submission was on the decision making process, with the VMC advocating for reasonable and fair outcomes and for all decisions, including ministerial decisions, to be open to merits reviews.

The VMC advocated strongly for families to be kept together wherever possible, with due consideration of family circumstances and carer responsibilities in the caseload priorities. This position was informed by the VMC's regular engagement with families who have come to Australia from countries torn apart by war and conflict (Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia, South Sudan, etc.), who value the safe haven that Australia has extended, providing them with opportunities for their future and the future of their children.

The VMC also expressed alarm that many individuals from families like these are being viewed as a law and order problem without necessarily proving as much through criminal law procedures. This is particularly concerning given the totalitarian and authoritarian nature of governance in their countries of origin, where compliance can be a life and death matter. The VMC spoke to these issues at a public hearing in July 2018.

## Proud to Belong Publication

In early 2018, the VMC launched its *Proud to Belong* publication, providing a snapshot of the wide-ranging contributions diverse Victorians make to our state.

Featuring profiles of newly arrived Victorians as well as those whose ancestors immigrated to Australia generations ago, *Proud to Belong* offers glimpses into the social, cultural, economic, political and environmental benefits that multiculturalism offers. Complementing the stories, *Proud to Belong* also gives insights into some of the circumstances producing refugees, such as wars in Syria and Somalia. Well-known diverse Victorians have also shared recipes which represent their ancestries and identities. *Proud to Belong* subsequently informed the 2018 Cultural Diversity Week theme (see page 14), which will continue in 2018-19.

The book's title was inspired by the pride in the sense of belonging demonstrated by some of our newest Australians at their citizenship ceremonies. It has been well received and widely distributed, and is for sale at the National Gallery of Victoria.

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*"Proud to Belong asks Victorians to think about what makes them feel a strong sense of belonging, and to reflect on the important role we all play in ensuring our communities are welcoming and inclusive."*

Helen Kapalos, VMC Chairperson

## Religious Leaders Discuss Service Provision for LGBTI Community

The VMC supported a forum on LGBTI inclusive service provision, which brought together multicultural and faith-based service providers working across sectors such as aged care, disability, housing, family violence and health. Forum discussions covered:

- ▶ The impact of exclusion and discrimination
- ▶ The need for inclusive services that affirm the well-being of LGBTI people in Victoria's multicultural and faith communities

- ▶ Outcomes of community projects supported by the Victorian Government's LGBTI Multicultural Grants Program
- ▶ Best practice approaches to the provision of inclusive services for LGBTI people from diverse communities

This forum built upon the work achieved at a 2017 inclusive service provision forum, in particular upholding a Statement of Support for LGBTI people which was issued by multicultural and multifaith participants, published by the VMC and circulated widely by other stakeholders.

## Game Changers Panel Discussion

During Cultural Diversity Week, the VMC partnered with the Footscray University Town Initiative to bring together members of the Pasifika and African communities for a networking evening which used music as a platform for cultural expression and sharing. The event was attended by students, community leaders, academics, and the broader community, with the two communities connecting over issues such as identity, discrimination, cultural expression and community service. Together with the two groups, the VMC is planning future intercultural events to strengthen community ties, knowledge and understanding.

The event was part of the Game Changers conversation series which presents and explores pivotal ideas, personalities and moments in Australia's evolving story. The Footscray University Town Initiative is a partnership between Maribyrnong City Council and Victoria University that sees education, jobs, creativity and opportunity at the heart of the future of Footscray, one of Victoria's most diverse areas.



Commissioner for Gender and Sexuality Ro Allen with VMC Chairperson Helen Kapalos and other equality advocates at the forum on LGBTI inclusive service provision, July 2018

# Diversity: Victoria's Treasure

## OBJECTIVE 8

Promote the social, cultural and economic benefits of diversity.

### Multicultural Chamber of Commerce Group

More than 25 ethnic chambers of commerce are active in Victoria, and in 2016-17 the VMC established a Multicultural Chamber of Commerce Group as a forum for collaboration. The inaugural meeting was held in 2017 and attended by representatives of 11 chambers.

The Group aims to increase economic opportunities for members, assist newly arrived migrants and refugees with employment opportunities, internships and mentoring, and promote unity and understanding amongst Victoria's diverse business communities.

The Multicultural Chamber of Commerce Group continued and strengthened its collaborations in 2017-18, working towards a key event towards the end of 2018.

### Community Grants Program

Each year the Victorian Government funds multicultural initiatives through the Community Grants Program. VMC Commissioners review applications and endorse those that align with the VMC's objectives. The grants program includes:

- ▶ Multicultural Festivals and Events Grants, which encourages participation of the whole Victorian community in festivals and events to celebrate and embrace our vibrant multicultural diversity. The program supports culturally diverse communities to feel more connected to their cultural heritage and identity. The fund continues to be warmly received by community groups with more than 1,000 applications received in the recent funding round.
- ▶ Community Infrastructure and Cultural Precincts Grants, which are provided to culturally diverse communities across Victoria to support the building, upgrading and fitout of community infrastructure. The program supports culturally diverse communities by increasing the safety and accessibility of community facilities.



Vietnamese Community in Australia - Victorian Chapter Inc, a recipient of a Community Infrastructure and Cultural Precincts grant



### Private Sector Diversity and Inclusion Forum

To bolster knowledge and ability of the private sector to deliver diversity and inclusion initiatives in their workplaces, the VMC partnered with financial services firm PwC to deliver a special conversation series. With representatives from more than 40 businesses at the inaugural event, VMC Chairperson Helen Kapalos delivered a presentation featuring corporate success stories from throughout the globe, showcasing how diversity and inclusion initiatives have helped to increase productivity, bottom lines, and harmonious workplaces and communities.

The event was also an opportunity to share the successes of the Recruit Smarter program, launched by the Victorian Government and supported by the VMC, which aims to develop and drive inclusive recruitment practices and to address unconscious bias in recruitment across the public, private and non-government sectors.

Participants praised the PwC and the VMC for the innovative initiative, and requested subsequent

events in 2018-19 to continue supporting diverse Victorians' economic and leadership opportunities and sense of belonging.

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*"I aspire to be a role model in our community and corporate Australia, leading initiatives that promote an inclusive community and workplace where our people can bring all of themselves to work and are proud of their cultural heritage."*

**Huss Mustafa OAM, General Manager of Multicultural Community Banking at CommBank, featured in the VMC publication *Proud to Belong***

# Citizenship: The Rights and Responsibilities

## OBJECTIVE 9

Promote the rights and responsibilities of citizenship as a unifying force that strengthens our diverse multicultural community.

### Race and Media Forum

During 2017-18, various communities raised concerns with the VMC, the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission (VEOHRC), and the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) about the intensification of public debate about race, immigration and multiculturalism. To highlight the significant implications for human rights and community harmony that public debates can have, the three Commissions delivered a special forum comprising media representatives and community members. The event was also a chance for community members to gain a better understanding of how media works and how they might better engage journalists on issues concerning race and multiculturalism.

Held at the Wheeler Centre for Books, Writing and Ideas, the panel consisted of lawyer and social entrepreneur Zione Walker-Nthenda, Vice President of the Islamic Council of Victoria Adel Salman, SBS journalist Sarah Abo, and The Age editor Alex Lavelle. The event featured opening remarks from VEOHRC Commissioner Kristen Hilton, closing remarks from AHRC Race Discrimination Commissioner Dr Tim Soutphommasane, and was moderated by VMC Chairperson Helen Kapalos. The panel discussion and forum facilitated dialogue between media, communities, advocates and researchers, and aimed to contribute to enhanced community harmony and discussion of public issues.

### Advocating for Diverse Communities

In 2018, then Federal Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs, the Honourable Alan Tudge MP, suggested in several public forums that an English language ability test be introduced for migrants applying to become Australian citizens. The VMC responded to Minister Tudge's June 2018 opinion piece to say that while the VMC commended the Australian Government's ongoing investment in English learning for migrants, there were concerns around changing any English language requirements to qualify for Australian citizenship when there was no evidential need for such change.

The VMC advised that, throughout Victoria, diverse community members overwhelmingly report to the VMC that 510 hours of classes and "conversational" English is not enough to gain employment or participate in higher education.

The VMC suggested there is enormous unmet need, and advised that additional Commonwealth spending on the current system did not equate with evidence of meeting the need or improving outcomes.

The VMC suggested the government consider the recommendations of a 2015 ACIL Allen Evaluation report into the Adult Migrant English Program which outlined what was needed to improve the program.

The VMC suggested the government consider flexibility in program delivery, considering the need for some humanitarian migrants to rebuild their lives, and recuperate from trauma, and how being under mental health duress affects one's learning ability.

# Promoting Community Service

## OBJECTIVE 10

Promote community service as a principle that builds a stronger society.

### Australian Broadcasting Corporation Multicultural Internships

The VMC partnered with the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) to provide dedicated media internships for aspiring young journalists and storytellers from diverse cultural backgrounds. Over 12 weeks, three interns will undertake hands-on work experience across the state, with rotations in metro news production, metro radio and regional news.

The internship program seeks to make newsroom workforces more reflective of the diverse community they serve. It also aims to grant Victorians of diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds a foot in the door of the highly competitive industry, with VMC Chairperson Helen Kapalos having begun her media career at SBS through a similar scheme.

The first interns will begin their paid placements in 2018-19, funded by the Victorian Government, and with mentoring support provided by experts from the Australian Film, Television and Radio School. One placement was provided as a prize at the second annual VMC Film Festival (see page 15).



The Multicultural Champions with VMC Chairperson Helen Kapalos and the Minister for Multicultural Affairs Robin Scott, February 2018

### Multicultural Champions Program

Victoria's inaugural Multicultural Champions program acknowledged people who, through their community service, have been instrumental in breaking down barriers and misunderstanding between diverse communities and promoting the benefits of multiculturalism.

The first two Champions were announced at the Multicultural Awards for Excellence ceremony in November 2017. The remaining 2018 Champions were announced at a multicultural networking event held in February 2018, which was supported by the Commonwealth Bank of Australia. The 2018 Multicultural Champions are:

Ajit Singh Chauhan, Anand Shome, Ann Foley, Barbara Brown, Batul Gulani, Caterina Revrenna, Chap Chow, Deepak Vinayak, Gary Li, John McKinnin, Judy Tang, Mariam Issa, Neeraj Nanda, Parsu Sharma-Luitai, Saara Sabbagh, Sambo Meng, Sam Feng, Sopea Sao and Youhorn Chea.

Through a series of individual consultations with the Champions, the VMC gained a deeper understanding of their respective activities and how their work is positively impacting communities. For example, Multicultural Champion John McKinnin was awarded \$5,000 through the Community Support Fund to provide helmets and bike locks for newly arrived migrants to complement the refurbished bikes they'd received through the Corio Norlane Lions Bicycle and Computer Program.

The Multicultural Champions program will continue in 2018-19 to be a flagship activity focused on capacity building and promoting community service and social cohesion in Victoria.

## Multicultural Awards for Excellence

Victoria's Multicultural Awards for Excellence honour individuals and organisations for outstanding initiatives that foster cross-cultural understanding between all Victorians, support migrants and refugees, and celebrate and strengthen Victoria's diverse communities.

In 2017, the VMC received 161 nominations of Victorians who have made outstanding contributions to advancing multiculturalism, equality and inclusion. A panel selected 60 award recipients for the following categories:

- ▶ Premier's Award for Community Harmony
- ▶ Multicultural Honour Roll
- ▶ Award for Meritorious Service to the Community
- ▶ Business Award
- ▶ Education and Early Childhood Award
- ▶ Youth Award
- ▶ Community Innovation Award
- ▶ Government and Civic Leadership Award
- ▶ Media Award
- ▶ Police awards

The 16th annual awards were presented at a ceremony at Government House hosted by the Governor of Victoria, Linda Dessau AC, and attended by government representatives, police, community leaders, as well as recipients' family, friends and supporters.

*"It's just a matter of knowing one another... as soon as you meet someone, and understand that person also has values that we all carry, there's no stereotype left."*

**Ajit Singh Chauhan, recipient of a 2017 Award for Meritorious Service to the Community**

Highly Commended recipient for the 2017 Media Award Dorcas Utkovic with Minister for Multicultural Affairs Robin Scott at Victoria's Multicultural Awards for Excellence ceremony, November 2017





# Appendix 1

## COMMUNITY SUPPORT FUND RECIPIENTS

South Sudanese Community Consultation	10000
ACFS Reception & Bill Morrow Lecture	5000
Global Participation Workshop At School	2000
Pronia 45th Anniversary Gala Fundraising Event	5000
Western Macedonia - History And Traditions Through Traditional Music	2000
Culturally Diverse Women (CDW)	2000
Maori Cross Cultural Resilience Forum	4000
Human Rights Awareness Conference	2000
2017 Australian Hellenic Golf Open & Cocktail Event	2000
Greek Orthodox Parish Of North Altona Annual Festival 2017	3500
Asean Games Australia 2017	8000
Walking Together For Inner And Outer Peace	10000
African Australian Women's Leadership Forum	4200
Salamfest	6800
Sisterworks Gala Dinner: Fundraiser And Connecting Entrepreneurial Migrant Women	3500
Celebrating 30 Years Of Multicultural Inclusivity	5000
Organisational Support	1200
Year End Cultural Presentation	750
Tours To Places Of Worship & Multifaith-Multicultural Concert	5000
Seeds Of Hope And Love - Cultural Sharing Program	2000
South Sudanese Youth Festival	3000
Peregrine Falcons African Women's Basketball Team	10000
Mildura Interfaith Women's Group	2000
Rebetiko Festival Melbourne	5000
African Victorian Women's Friendship Dinner	5500
Malanka 2018	2500
Diversity Women Interfaith Dinner	5000
Inspiring Muslim Youth Through Music And Art	5000
Cross Cultural Understandings Of Creation	5000

Hope And Its Social Responsibility	5000
Team Africa Inc	2000
Community Action Plan Preparation	5500
Incubate Hackathon	3000
Annual Sport Day And Youth Interaction Evening	3000
Given The Chance Employer Network Breakfast	2000
Melbourne Employment Forum	2000
11th Annual Footy Caldplay Gala	5000
Youth Rhythms	10000
Bastille Day French Festival 2018	10000
Ararat Iftar Dinner And Community Meetings Until December 2018	4500
Cultural Concert	10000
VMC ABC Multicultural Internship Program	56328

# Appendix 2

## VICTORIA'S MULTICULTURAL AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE RECIPIENTS

### Premier's Award for Community Harmony

**WINNER:** Batul Gulani

Batul Gulani is the founder and director of AMAFHH Federation, which provides counselling for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds with a particular focus on young people and women experiencing domestic violence. She also established the Islamic Shia Council of Victoria, an umbrella group which brings together more than 20 local Shia organisations.

### Multicultural Honour Roll

**2017 INDUCTEE:** Dr Matin Ghayour Minaie

Dr Matin Ghayour Minaie is a psychology researcher at Deakin University's Geelong campus who volunteers her time to help migrants, refugees and international students settle into the local community. She co-founded the Geelong Iranian Society in 2007 and established the first Persian-language program on local radio.

### Business Award

**HIGHLY COMMENDED:**

Swinburne University of Technology

**WINNER:** National Australia Bank (NAB)

Since 2009, NAB has provided

career opportunities for an often-marginalised group of jobseekers through its African-Australian Inclusion Program. A partnership with Jesuit Social Services, the program has seen more than 300 people undertake paid work experience with NAB, with 75% going on to find work in their chosen field.

### Education and Early Childhood Award

**WINNER:** Victorian Cooperative on Children's Services for Ethnic Groups (VICSEG)

VICSEG has a thirty-year history of supporting children, young people and families from migrant and refugee backgrounds. This award recognises the success of VICSEG's Refugee Student Engagement and Support Program, which aims to enhance participants' academic performance while also building individual resilience and community connections.

### Youth Award

**HIGHLY COMMENDED:** Wilson Poni, Alex Tigani

**WINNER:** Martha Metuisela

A youth worker with Brimbank City Council and co-founder of the group Westside Pasifika, Martha Metuisela works tirelessly to support multicultural youth in

Melbourne's western suburbs. Recently she has been involved in projects which aim to foster intercultural understanding between African and Pasifika communities and provide a forum for them to discuss common strengths and challenges.

### Community Innovation Award

**HIGHLY COMMENDED:**

Dandenong Youth Services, Robinvale District Health Services

**WINNER:** Kaye Graves

Kaye Graves manages the cultural diversity team at Bendigo Community Health Services and was integral in combating the anti-Islam sentiment that followed a 2015 proposal for a new mosque. Her team ran "understanding Islam" sessions for health workers and the public, including one specifically for hairdressers in recognition of their central role in everyday conversations in the community.

### Government and Civic Leadership Award

**HIGHLY COMMENDED:** City of Darebin

**WINNER:** Dental Health Services Victoria

Dental Health Services Victoria gives refugees and asylum seekers priority access to dentists and has partnered

with the Victorian Refugee Health Network to develop a toolkit for clinicians. Their work recognises the unique needs of people who have been deprived of oral health necessities while fleeing conflict and who can be unfamiliar with the Australian health system.

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### Media Award

**HIGHLY COMMENDED:** Olivia (Ngoc) Nguyen and Trinh Nguyen, Dorcas Utkovic

**WINNER:** Abby Dinham

SBS journalist Abby Dinham tells the stories of new migrants and refugees who are kicking goals both on and off the sporting field. Her reports touch on the racism and stereotyping often experienced by her subjects, and aim to overcome readers' prejudices by giving multicultural community members a platform to talk about their achievements and aspirations.

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### Police Awards

#### Police Annual Multicultural Award

Leading Senior Constable Albert Fatileh  
Senior Constable Andrew McLachlan  
Sergeant Ben McWilliam  
Inspector Stephen Mutton  
Leading Senior Constable Gabrielle Tyacke

#### Police Multicultural Media Award

Danielle Fleeton  
Andrew Markakis  
Protective Services Officer Multicultural Award  
PSO Nicoletta Anaston  
PSO Joseph Simonelli

#### Police Community Exemplary Award

East Preston Islamic College  
Victoria Police North West Metro Region – Somali Community Engagement Plan  
Victoria Police Southern Region – Alcohol Diversion Program

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#### Award for Meritorious Service to the Community – Organisations

**HIGHLY COMMENDED:**

AGAPI Care  
Chinese Women's Association of Victoria  
Council of Christians and Jews  
Greek Australian Recreational and Instructive League of Victoria

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#### Award for Meritorious Service to the Community – Individuals (paid work)

**HIGHLY COMMENDED:**

Ross Barnett  
Ajit Singh Chauhan  
Ann Foley  
Catherine Hemingway  
Dr Fiona Hill  
Dr Raj Khillan  
Jamuna Parajuli  
Dr Lata Satyen

#### Award for Meritorious Service to the Community – Individuals (voluntary work)

**HIGHLY COMMENDED:**

Dr Gurpreet (Sonia Singh) Cheema  
Paraskeva Laholat  
Halima Sheikh-Mohamud Mohamed  
Sarah Williams

**COMMENDED:**

Katerina Abramoff  
Faizullah Ashna  
Maria D'Amico  
Donato Di Fabrizio OAM  
Dana Lynikas  
Walid Markas  
Sambo Meng  
Nawal Kishore Moudgil  
Quan Nguyen  
Boris Oiberman  
Nicholas Piperis  
Adel Salman  
Koula Teo  
Reverend Thich Phuoc Thai  
Michael Kwok Leung Tse  
Beyhan Yilmaz

# Appendix 3

## REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS 2017–2019

### Barwon South West

**CHAIR:** Rosaria Zarro  
Graham Banks  
Matin Ghayour-Minaie\*  
Niraj Karanjeet  
Htoo Kolo  
Danielle Parker  
Luba Pryslak\*  
Mutheinchri Ra  
Somayah Shirzad  
Dr Neha Singh  
Andrew Alexander\*

### Hume

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Nivanka De Silva\*\*  
Lorna Gillespie  
Susan Ingleton  
Carol McQuade  
Omeni Ndlovu  
Charlene Norton  
Dr Apollo Nsubuga-Kyobe  
Mayssa Powell\*\*  
Rashidi Sumaili  
Betul Tuna  
Matthew Walker  
Sarmed Yassin\*

### Grampians

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Chez Dichiera  
Mona Hatwal  
Andrew Horvat  
Muhammad Raza Hussaini  
Manzoor Mian  
John Millington  
Meeta Narsi  
Eddie Nsanzimana  
Barry Petrovski  
Julie Pettett

Shiree Pilkinton  
Frances Salenga  
Ambili Unni

### Gippsland

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Yumna Ahmed  
Cate Chaiyot  
Farhat Firdous  
Peter Kaka  
Soula Kanellopoulos  
Dr Christine Lee  
Jason Lee\*  
Murray Lobley  
Heidi Losic-Clarke  
John Shaban  
Lisa Sinha

### Loddon Mallee

**CHAIR:** Sam Almaliki  
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Dr Antonio Alessi  
Moustafa Al-Rawi  
Nay Chee Aung  
Abhishek Awasthi  
Zahir Azimi  
Darren John Brown  
Susan Denny  
Kaye Graves  
Kate McInnes  
George Mudford  
Dean Wickham

### Eastern Metropolitan

**CHAIR:** Tina Hosseini  
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Ra'id Alhamami  
Gergis Ayoub  
Wesley Bawia  
Rufina Chan  
Bright Chinganya  
Shameela Essop

Dr Helen Forbes-Mewett  
Naishadh Gadani  
Chipo Juru  
Dr Brigitte Lambert  
Mingjie (Roger) Li  
Marta Marot  
Siva Sivagnanam  
Michael Smith  
Tina Stathopoulos  
Dr Noel Stonehouse  
Sabaratnam Sundaramoorthy  
Viji Tangirala  
James Thangman  
Bwe Thay  
Edwin Town  
Alan Vanbiaksanga

### Southern Metropolitan

**CHAIR:** Walter Rapoport  
Komi Jesse Bana  
Edith Campbell  
Alba Chilakhtine  
Rumi Commons  
Nizar El Hajj  
Andrew Gai  
Selba Gondoza Luka  
Eva Hussain  
Alexander Kats  
Hannibal Khoury  
Patricia Kimtia  
Shashi Kochhar  
Kwobdoch Kwajakwan  
Susan Levkovski  
Nyadieng Luk  
Girish Madhavan Pillai  
Kasuni Mendis  
Weda Mohseni  
Tomas Morales  
Monique O'Keefe  
Paul Saluni  
Carlo Spada  
Stephen Thomas  
Mata Tuerei Mani  
Grissel Walmaggia



Regional Advisory Council meeting  
for Hume, October 2017

## North West Metropolitan

**CHAIR:** Sisay Dinku

Ragai Abdelfadiel  
 Ali Ahmed  
 Shanthy Antony  
 Lisa Ashton  
 Pullareddy Baddam  
 Tony Ball  
 Ross Barnett  
 Biong Biong  
 Gemma Boucher  
 Kathryn Bowden  
 Dr Ritesh Chugh  
 Farooq Dar  
 Cristina Del Frate  
 Jude Ediae  
 Erhan Eryegit  
 Monica Forson  
 Orlando Gibson

Batul Gulani  
 Puneet Gulati  
 Amrita Gurung  
 Amer Hagos  
 Ibrahim Hajj  
 Jamad Hersi  
 Iqbal Hossain  
 Amna Iqbal  
 Anam Javed  
 Louie Josef  
 Zufaidah Juri  
 Lorika Kadriu  
 Tenzin Khangsar  
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Mustafa Najib  
 Diana Noor  
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 Suresh Ramachandraiah  
 Dr Gurdev Rattan  
 Silvia Renda  
 Robert Ring Aduer\*  
 Sunny Saksham Katyal  
 Dawood Sammour  
 Paul Seidl  
 Celeste Shambrook  
 Dalal Sleiman  
 Tenenet Taye  
 Gurpreet Verma  
 Dr Monica Zaman  
 Janetta Ziino

\*appointed 21 June 2018 \*\* resigned





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Graphic design by Franky Demaria Design

#### Annual report 2017-18

The 2017-18 Annual Report covers the core work of the Victorian Multicultural Commission (VMC) and its achievements within the context of its objectives and functions, as outlined in the *Multicultural Victoria Act 2011*.

#### Accessibility

If you would like to receive this publication in an alternative format, please contact the Victorian Multicultural Commission on [info@vmc.vic.gov.au](mailto:info@vmc.vic.gov.au). This publication is available in PDF format on the internet at [www.multicultural.vic.gov.au](http://www.multicultural.vic.gov.au).

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Sampa The Great at Culture Waves concert, March 2018