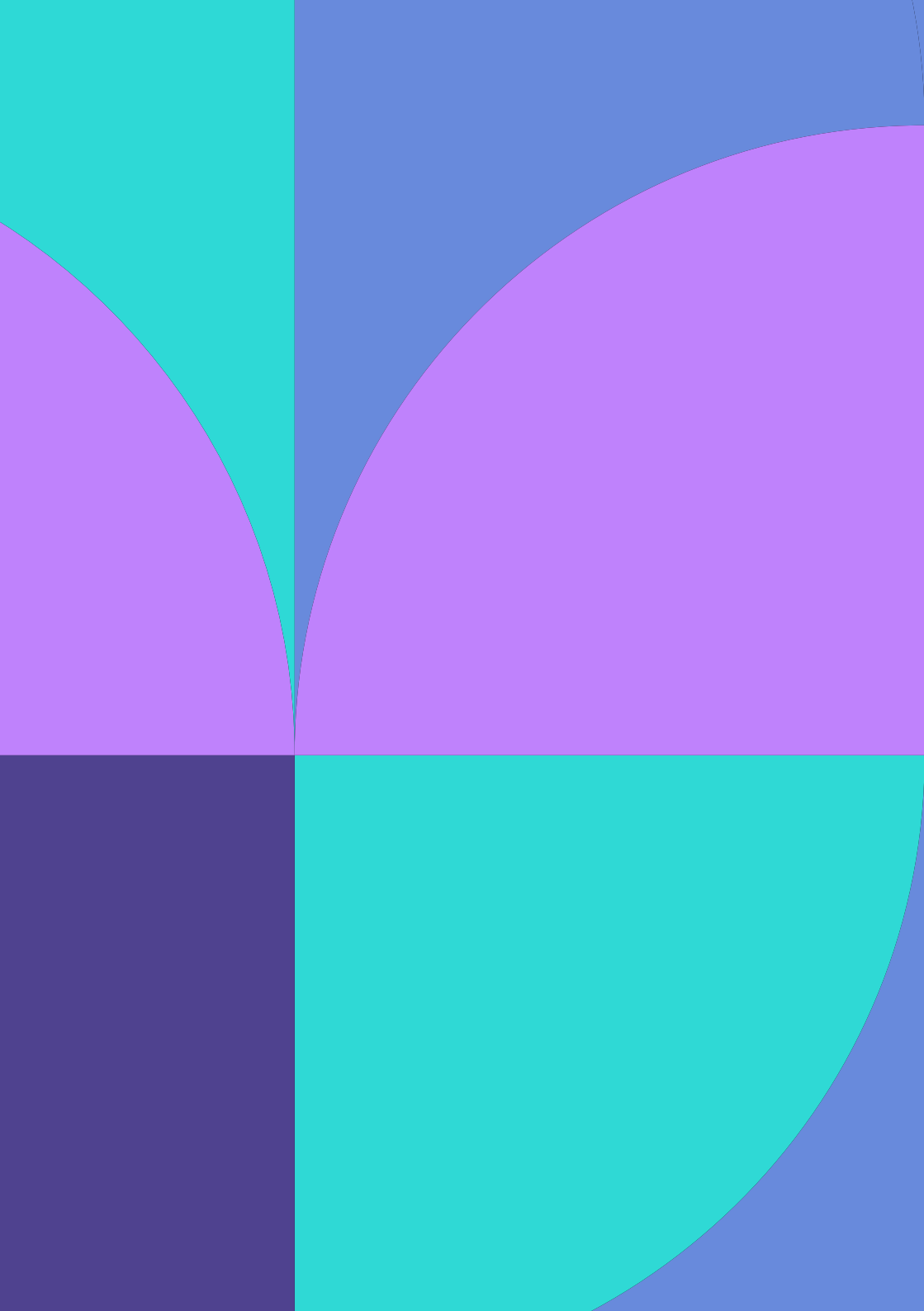


VICTORIAN **REFUGEE** **AWARDS** 2021

VICTORIAN
multicultural
commission
strengthening our community





ORDER OF **PROCEEDINGS**

Welcome by MC: Mariam Issa

Welcome to Country

Address: The Hon Ros Spence MP
Minister for Multicultural Affairs

Address: Vivienne Nguyen AM
Chairperson
Victorian Multicultural Commission

Award Presentations:
Introduced by Vivienne Nguyen AM
Presented by The Hon Ros Spence MP

Performance

MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER



The Victorian Refugee Awards recognise the achievements of Victorians from refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds, and the contribution they have made – and continue to make – to our state.

These Awards celebrate people, businesses and organisations who have excelled through study, work, entrepreneurial or volunteer efforts and are proudly coordinated by the Victorian Multicultural Commission.

Our state is culturally rich, diverse and resilient. Through these awards, we are able to highlight the remarkable contributions of outstanding Victorians from refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds who have gone above and beyond to make a positive impact in our community.

On behalf of the Victorian Government, I extend my thanks to the Victorian Multicultural Commission for organising these awards and offer congratulations to all 2021 award recipients and nominees.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ros Spence'.

The Hon. Ros Spence MP

Minister for Multicultural Affairs

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRPERSON



We are delighted to bring back the Victorian Refugee Awards in 2021, as we raise awareness about issues affecting refugees and asylum seekers and celebrate their achievements in our community.

These awards are an opportunity to reflect on diversity and inclusiveness as well as lift up our multicultural communities as they recover from the isolation and challenges of 2020.

Victoria's success as a multicultural society is built upon the ongoing contributions of all Victorians, and tonight we recognise and promote the achievements and contributions of people from refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds. We believe that by showcasing the rich diversity and achievements of our diverse communities, barriers will be broken down and acceptance and respect can be cultivated.

On behalf of the commission, I applaud all nominees and award recipients. I wish you all the best in the future as you continue to strengthen multiculturalism and social cohesion in Victoria.

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping, sweeping lines.

Vivienne Nguyen AM

Chairperson, Victorian Multicultural Commission

YOUNG LEADER AWARD

Recognises refugees aged 25 or under who have made an outstanding contribution through study, work or volunteer efforts.



Taj Aldeeb

Taj Aldeeb is a public speaker, musician and actress passionate about sharing stories and

empowering young community members from refugee backgrounds in Victoria. In her recent work, Taj has led programs to promote storytelling by refugees and asylum seekers during the COVID-19 pandemic, including in a documentary series that focused on the 2020 social housing lockdowns. Taj also shares her own lived experience with primary and secondary school students and teachers, raising their understanding of migration and refugee stories. Taj's talents in the performing arts also broaden the public's awareness and appreciation for the refugee experience, with her appearances in 'The Fall' at the Sydney Film Festival and in 'THEM' at the Arts Centre Melbourne.



Paw Ku Htee

Paw Ku Htee is a young community leader who has excelled in supporting the broader Bendigo area, and in particular the Karen community, since arriving from a refugee camp in Thailand. Through Paw's firsthand experience adapting to a new life in Victoria, and the skills she gained in her certificate III through the Bendigo Community Health Services Karen Traineeship in 2020, she has come to contribute greatly, for example in cofacilitating sessions with the CFA and SES to help prepare the Karen community for emergency weather events. Paw also staffs the Bendigo Karen phone hotline to support new arrivals with everyday life questions, such as negotiating traffic, pedestrian safety and using the public transport network. Paw's work informing, translating and codesigning culturally appropriate information is making a lasting impact on the Karen community.



Yusuf Liban

Yusuf Liban is a youth group leader, active volunteer and role model for Muslim youth.

Playing an active role at the Heidelberg Mosque, he has provided support at interfaith events and open days and assisted with the coordination of multicultural Iftar dinners at the Elsedeaq Islamic Society.

During 2020, Yusuf supported small businesses and communities of non-English-speaking backgrounds by providing interpreting services and translations of government health advice and leading the communication of COVID-safe plans, QR codes and public health guidelines.

Yusuf was also involved in COVID testing campaigns and fighting against the spread of misinformation. Yusuf is leading by example and continues to actively engage with his community by running a popular youth group at the Heidelberg Mosque.

ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Recognises the outstanding achievements of refugees who have personally or professionally excelled through study, work, entrepreneurial or volunteer efforts.



Mohammad Ali Nazari

Ali Nazari is a Hazara refugee and is the youngest of four multilingual community

engagement team members at Tenants Victoria. Ali has made significant contributions to their extensive outreach program, connecting with multicultural communities throughout Victoria, in particular the state's local Afghan and Iranian communities who speak Dari. Ali's area of focus is in community education on tenancy rights and supporting people to access emergency COVID-19 rental protections, including financial aid. Ali has worked on a range of successful projects with Tenants Victoria, including conducting a radio interview with SBS Dari, hosting live Facebook sessions in English and Dari with the Victoria Afghan Association Network and designing information posters in Dari.



Nayran Tabiei

Nayran Tabiei is a business owner, multilingual chef, volunteer and swimming instructor who has become an integral figure in her community, creating safe spaces and utilising her many skills and lived experiences to support others experiencing similar challenges to her own. Nayran's journey to Australia in 2012 from Syria and Iran inspired her passion for advocacy, and now she works to shine a light on Australia's migrant and refugee communities experiencing disadvantage, marginalisation and disengagement. Nayran is a qualified swim instructor for the successful program Swimmin' Women, which supports adult migrant women learning to swim while breaking down cultural and language barriers. And her impressive talents with cooking have also helped her forge new connections with people while providing food relief and food education for migrants and the broader community.

LEADERSHIP AWARD

Recognises refugees who have demonstrated outstanding leadership within the community.



Elvis Martin

Elvis Martin is a community advocate who has tirelessly volunteered at 32 organisations in support of issues faced by minority groups. After enduring a number of personal life challenges, Elvis worked to support those going through similar experiences to him. Elvis has advocated for and lead projects on issues such as homelessness, mental health, asylum seekers, domestic violence, the LGBTQIA+ community and gender equality. He is currently the Principle Ambassador of the National Youth Commission Australia and R U OKAY? Day. His significant work on many boards and in supporting engagement on social media groups such as International Students at Work has helped educate international students on their rights around workplace bullying and harassment. In his work across the councils, boards, and groups that he sits on, Elvis delivers unique value and insight into the challenges facing marginalised groups.



Philip Moo Eh

Philip Moo Eh is the Chair of the Australian Karen Organisation that supports and organises programs, activities and events to promote the rights of refugees in Victoria. Some of Philip's recent achievements include creating a quick response program to assist Burmese families, individuals and international students that were impacted by the health and economic fallout of the COVID-19 crisis. His active participation in the community and leadership through the Australian Karen Organisation, as well as convenor of the Victorian Karen Communities Network Group, has resulted in greater representation and outcomes for refugees and migrants across the state. In a collaborative effort this year, Philip also submitted a petition to the Australian Parliament denouncing the recent violations of human rights of Karens in their state in Burma. Beyond his extensive efforts supporting refugee and migrant groups, Philip was instrumental in raising funds to assist Victorians affected by recent bushfires and international students impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

BUSINESS AWARD

Recognises organisations and businesses who are implementing innovative practices to support the employment, contribution and/or participation of refugees.



Happy Brain Education

Happy Brain Education (HBE) is a not-for-profit organisation offering a range of programs to help young refugees excel within the Australian education system. HBE provides one-on-one tutoring sessions to support refugees academically as well as a mentoring program providing critical connections between students and skilled mentors, predominantly from tertiary institutions. The mentors, all volunteers, are young and passionate members of the community who are driven by the belief that newly arrived migrants, asylum seekers and young people from refugee backgrounds deserve equal opportunities and access to a good education. HBE has supported over 1,500 refugee students so far, and continues to make a deep and lasting impact on young people with difficult backgrounds.



Eva Hussain,
Polaron Language Services

Eva Hussain has spent over 20 years working towards improving communication with multicultural communities on important issues, such as healthcare and social inclusion. Eva arrived in Australia in 1986 as one of the last Jewish refugees from Poland, at the age of 18. Since then, Eva has overcome social barriers such as homelessness, lack of education and domestic violence, eventually establishing her own business, Polaron Language Services. Polaron is now a thriving enterprise that delivers language services to tens of thousands of Australians and supports many initiatives, such as Cultural Diversity Week, the Asylum Seekers' Resource Centre and Slawik Awards, as well as many grassroots community events. Eva also provides administrative and linguistic support to Holocaust survivors.



Trung Dzung Le, *Hollywood Nails*

Trung Dzung Le, a Vietnamese-born entrepreneur and community advocate, is an institution in Victoria. The founder of Hollywood Nails, an icon in the beauty industry in Melbourne, Trung Dzung has created hundreds of jobs across the state and had a wide reaching impact on the lives of those he has employed. Trung's support for and employment of migrants, in particular those with a refugee background, has offered critical opportunities and pathways to education and empowerment in these marginalised groups. Trung Dzung also makes philanthropic contributions to the Victorian community and holds key advocacy roles across charities, local hospitals, ethno-specific aged care residences, multi-cultural community organisations and temples.

INTRODUCING BRUCE FROM **FOOT SOLUTIONS**

After fleeing the Khmer Rouge regime in Cambodia, Bruce Wong arrived in Australia as a refugee in 1980 at the age of 18 with little possession. This second chance of life is the main cause for his involvement



in active charity. He is recognised for his strong advocacy for newly arrived refugees.

During the COVID crisis last year through the “Meals to the Community Covid-19 Project” he donated a refrigerated food delivery truck to distribute over 60,000 meals to the needy.

Bruce dedicates his life to helping others in his philanthropist role through his Christian convictions. His guiding motto is: “You shall love your neighbours as yourself.”

VICTORIAN **MULTICULTURAL** AWARDS FOR **EXCELLENCE** 2021

We honour extraordinary
Victorians for their
service to our
multicultural society.

Nominations now open.
multiculturalcommission.vic.gov.au

Victorian Multicultural Commission

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