## VICTORIAN MULTICULTURAL AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE 2022



VICTORIAN multicultural commission strengthening our community



### ORDER OF PROCEEDINGS

Welcome

Speech by The Hon. Linda Dessau AC, Governor of Victoria

Speech by The Hon. Ros Spence, Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Community Sport, Prevention of Family Violence and Youth

Presentation of awards

Networking and canapes

Conclusion of event

## MESSAGE FROM THE GOVERNOR



We warmly welcome each of you – the 2022 Victorian Multicultural Awards for Excellence recipients – along with your nominators, friends, family, colleagues and other guests to Victoria's Government House.

Through these Awards, we celebrate the contributions of individuals and organisations who have worked so hard to promote cultural diversity and inclusion across our community.

The wide-ranging Award categories are demonstrative of the variety of your contributions, and the diverse ways that you have each set about making Victoria a fairer and more harmonious place.

On behalf of all Victorians, congratulations for all that you have achieved, and thank you for your contributions to – in the words of Victoria's State motto – our ongoing *Peace and Prosperity*.

#### The Hon. Linda Dessau AC

Governor of Victoria

## MESSAGE FROM THE PREMIER



Victoria is, and always will be, a proudly multicultural state. The individuals, families and communities who've made Victoria their home have played an important role in making Victoria what it is today.

From arts to business, health and education, and from sports to advocacy, multicultural Victorians play a vital role in our State, bringing new perspectives, sharing lived-experiences and challenging us to do better.

Victorians are known for coming together and sharing in one another's experiences and keeping our diverse community safe through challenging and trying times. To that end, I also acknowledge the efforts made by those who support culturally diverse communities.

This evening, we come together to celebrate and recognise remarkable individuals and organisations for their contributions. Victoria is a better place because of the work that you do each and every day.

On behalf of our state and the Victorian Government – thank you.

**The Hon. Daniel Andrews MP** Premier of Victoria

## MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER



Victoria is a truly unique state and that is largely due to its cultural diversity. The number of individuals and organisations who contribute to this is tremendous, and these Awards recognise those whose work has been particularly extraordinary.

It is so inspiring to learn about the work being done by Victorians who strengthen cultural inclusion and impact positively on our society, especially during challenging times.

I am privileged to support the Victorian Multicultural Awards for Excellence and to celebrate the achievements of such dedicated and value-driven individuals and organisations.

On behalf of the Andrews Labor Government, I extend my thanks to the Victorian Multicultural Commission for coordinating the Awards. I personally thank all of the recipients for contributing to our multicultural State and am proud to acknowledge them through these Awards.

#### The Hon. Ros Spence MP

Minister for Multicultural Affairs

## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRPERSON



As Chairperson of the Victorian Multicultural Commission (the VMC), I witness the excellence that takes place in multicultural communities every day. It is so important to recognise this excellence and show our gratitude to those who tirelessly uplift community.

Every person and organisation we recognise today represents the best of Victoria's multicultural communities, and those who champion multiculturalism. Through their leadership, we see what is possible when all of us are seen, heard and understood.

Our state is strongest when all of us have a voice, as it allows everyone to reach their potential and be a role model for others in their community.

That is why, on behalf of the VMC, I am so proud to be honouring the 2022 award winners and those receiving a high-commendation.

To all who are being recognised, and all who have been nominated – thank you. It is because of you that we have a bright multicultural future in this state.

#### Vivienne Nguyen AM

Chairperson for the Victorian Multicultural Commission



Recognising artists, performers and organisations that develop and implement arts programs or initiatives that aim to improve intercultural learning or social cohesion through participation and performance.

#### Winner

#### Samuel Gaskin

Sam promotes, supports, and uplifts the BIPOC LGBTQIA+ community through his inclusive and celebrated company Beat Entertainment. His most recent work, RECKŌNING, is an intercultural music and theatre project that received four Melbourne Fringe awards.

#### **Highly Commended**

#### Sivarubhini Kanagasabai

Rubi founded Narthanalaya Academy of Indian Music and Dance, which has taught the magic of Indian music, song, and dance to over 500 students for the last 20 years at multicultural festivals, concerts, workshops and fundraising events.

#### Ryan Rezai

Ryan founded Baron Entertainment, which brings celebrated events and entertainers to Afghan music lovers around Australia. A member of the Afghan-Australian community for over 20 years, he is also President and founding member of the Association of Hazaras in Victoria.



Recognising businesses that provide outstanding service to Victorian multicultural communities and lead the way in building a culturally diverse and culturally safe workplace.

#### Winners

#### Metro Trains Melbourne

Metro delivered outstanding employment outcomes for refugees and asylum seekers through their Social Inclusion and Aboriginal Employment Strategy 2020-2024, transforming the lives of individuals, families, and communities.

#### John Holland Group

In the last year, John Holland created over 400 employment opportunities for people from culturally diverse, refugee and asylum seeker communities to deliver some of the State's most iconic and important projects including the Melbourne Metro Tunnel.

#### **Highly Commended**

#### Professional Migrant Women

Professional Migrant Women is a volunteerrun grassroots organisation that focuses on developing professional employment pathways, promoting visibility and increasing representation of migrant and culturally diverse women in corporate Australia.

#### Multicultural Business Engagement Team, Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions

The Multicultural Business Engagement Team addresses the disproportionately negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Victorian multicultural businesses by delivering inclusive, effective and culturally appropriate business programs.

#### Multicultural Home Support Services, Spectrum MRC

For over 20 years, Multicultural Home Support Services has provided more than 10,000 hours of culturally responsive and tailored in-home support to ageing people and people with disability in Melbourne's North.



Recognising short-term projects or programs completed in the last 18 months that used outside-the-box thinking to address a problem facing a culturally diverse community and that shares knowledge about a culture with a wider audience.

#### Winner

#### Black Diasporas Naarm Project

This project has empowered people of African heritage to take back harmful narratives of their experiences and identities and centre real voices and issues. The project collected hundreds of stories and experiences that gave rise to an exhibit, films, workshops, and a digital story map of Greater Melbourne.

#### **Highly Commended**

#### Asian Australian Volunteers Inc.

Asian Australian Volunteers is a community group that provided volunteer-led support to disadvantaged and vulnerable groups during the pandemic, including distributing free PPE to more than 120 frontline health workers and delivering around 2,500 free meals.



Recognising early childhood staff, services, schools, vocational education and training settings and not-for-profit organisations that deliver outstanding learning and teaching programs that enhance the social inclusion, wellbeing and education outcomes for children and students from culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

#### Winner - Early Childhood Education

#### Victorian Community Hubs

Victorian Community Hubs connect more than 4,000 multicultural families with their school, settlement services and each other. Programs include English classes, activities for preschool aged children, employment pathways, and sports, cooking, arts, sewing and health and wellbeing activities.

#### Highly Commended - Early Childhood Education

#### Monash Vale Early Learning Centre

Monash Vale Early Learning Centre is home to students and staff representing over 30 different cultural backgrounds. Their services emphasise cultural respect and celebration, equity, and an education that includes languages, identity, and storytelling.

#### St Anthony's Primary School Playgroup

St Anthony's Primary School Playgroup program provides high quality early childhood education in a culturally safe and supportive environment for children, parents, and carers from the neighbourhood, representing more than 40 cultural backgrounds.

#### Winner - School Education

#### Harmony Champs – Greater Shepparton Lighthouse and Culture & Co

Harmony Champs was an interactive anti-racism leadership program that delivered to grade 5-6 students at the newly merged Greater-Shepparton Secondary College. The program led to discussions of multiculturalism and belonging, and equipped teachers and students alike with the skills to confront racism.

#### Highly Commended - School Education

#### Abbotsford Primary School

Abbotsford Primary School celebrates cultural diversity and understanding through their Global Engagement program which sees all 150 students engage with students in China, Malaysia and Taiwan, through language classes, pen-pal programs and cultural exchanges.

#### Good Samaritan Catholic Primary School

The Hopeful Futures program at Good Samaritan Catholic Primary School responded to the disruption and turbulence of the COVID-19 pandemic. The program engaged families in the community, to listen to their experiences, capture their stories, promote health and wellbeing, and stay connected.

#### Matthew Majur

Demonstrating his commitment to sport, education and social connection for South Sudanese community, Matthew established a Dinka language school, founded the South Sudanese Lions basketball team and development program, and provides skills training for Sudanese families in the Wyndham area.

#### Winner - Vocational Education and Training (pre-accredited community-based training)

#### SisterWorks Inc.

SisterWorks has supported over 1,400 migrant, refugee, and asylum seeker women from 95 countries to build a better life in Australia through skills training and work opportunities. Since July 2021, over 300 women participated in their hospitality training program, which empowers women to build job-ready skills and career pathways.

#### Highly Commended – Vocational Education and Training (pre-accredited community-based training)

#### **Centre for Participation**

The Centre for Participation creates a safe learning environment for women with multicultural backgrounds through their Adult Community and Further Education programs. Their work builds the skillset and confidence of participants by addressing employment, language, engagement, and acculturation needs.

#### Winners – Vocational Education and Training (accredited training)

#### **Chisholm Institute**

From August 2021, Chisholm Institute enrolled 735 Afghan students in their Adult Migrant English Program, many of whom were newly arrived in Australia and had experience significant trauma. With leadership from teachers and Pathways Officers, Chisolm encouraged community support, healing, and recovery during the challenges of the pandemic

#### Kowanj

Kowanj is a not-for-profit, community-led organisation established in response tothe emerging social, educational, and employment needs of African refugees and new and emerging communities in Australia. Kowanj works to increase economic participation, reduce poverty, and encourage societal independence.

#### Highly Commended – Vocational Education and Training (accredited training)

#### Victoria University and Polytechnic

The Victoria University Cultural Inclusion Advocates are a group of staff committed to advancing cultural inclusion and racial equity at Victoria University and Polytechnic. They lead work in their respective colleges and share inclusive practice and projects.

#### **RMIT University**

In partnership with the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre, the RMIT Welcome Scholarship supports new and continuing students seeking asylum or holding a temporary protection visa, so that they may contribute to the social, civic and economic life of their communities.

#### Goulburn Ovens Institute of TAFE (GOTAFE)

GOTAFE are a leading provider of the Adult Migrant English Program and a Volunteer Tutor Program which builds student's confidence and English skills. In the past two years, they delivered training sessions to 500 students with a multicultural background in Greater Shepparton.



Recognising people, units, clubs or stations working or volunteering for Victoria's emergency services that promote and champion diversity and/or address the specific needs of multicultural communities.

#### Winner

#### Norieul Kinross

Norieul developed innovative internal practices across Ambulance Victoria and the Strathbogie region that promote and support cultural diversity and inclusion. She worked to ensure that multicultural Victorians are connected to culturally appropriate ambulance services at all times, including translated resources and culturally safe support.



Recognising health practitioners, researchers and organisations that address the needs of people with culturally diverse backgrounds and/or provide outstanding health care, support or services to multicultural communities.

#### Winners

#### cohealth's Bicultural Program

cohealth's bi-cultural program hosts a network of 200+ bi-cultural workers across Victoria. These workers use their cultural knowledge, language skills, lived experience and community connections to elevate community voices, co-design and deliver programs, share information and facilitate cultural safety.

#### CALD Communities Taskforce Local Partnerships

The Bicultural Workers and Community Champion Network provided extensive support to almost half a million multicultural Victorians during the COVID-19 pandemic. Key achievements include promoting and designing translated health messaging and coordinating community vaccination information sessions.

#### **Highly Commended**

#### The Water Well Project

The Water Well Project' provided 211 free, interactive, and inclusive health education sessions to 5211 culturally diverse participants facilitated by volunteer healthcare professionals. Topics included childhood development, mental health and how to navigate Australia's healthcare system.



Recognising people and organisations that promote or improve access for multicultural communities to the justice system, support or advocate for multicultural communities to address systemic issues within the justice system or promote cultural diversity and inclusion in the legal sector.

#### Winners

#### **Akuch Kuol Anyieth**

Akuch creates awareness and advocates for family violence prevention in the community through training, workshops and harnessing the influence of prominent faith and cultural groups. Her career in social justice and academia has brought attention to systems of power that perpetuate violence against migrants, refugees, women and young people.

#### Women's Legal Service Victoria – Migration Pilot

Women's Legal Service Victoria advises and assists women and their children experiencing family violence. Since their inception, they have assisted clients from 34 different countries with a range of religious and cultural backgrounds. The services provided include legal support and advice, financial counselling and casework.

#### **Highly Commended**

#### Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission

The Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission's Reducing Racism Project improved access for multicultural communities to report racism and understand and exercise their human rights.

Funded by the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, the project ran for multiple years and ended in 2022.

#### Marama Kufi

Marama facilitates the engagement of culturally diverse communities with the law and police in Victoria. He translates legal information into several community languages and conducts information sessions on rights and responsibilities.



Recognising local government authorities (councils) for major initiatives that meet the needs of their culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse communities.

#### Winner

#### City of Ballarat

As part of its Intercultural Strategic Plan, the City of Ballarat "Intercultural Practice in Action", a project facilitating cultural awareness and social inclusion Over 10 years, the Intercultural Ambassador Program, Intercultural Employment Pathway and Harmony Fest Celebration have delivered strong cultural, social and economic benefits for the community.

#### **Highly Commended**

#### City of Melbourne

The City of Melbourne developed a series of initiatives to welcome, support and empower international students and newly arrived Afghan refugees during and beyond the pandemic. Together, they address mental and physical wellbeing, social connection, and create pathways to employment and financial independence.

#### Maribyrnong City Council

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Maribyrnong City Council worked to provide culturally and linguistically diverse communities with culturally relevant, best practice communications and services. This was exemplified in their Ambassador Program which promoted greater communication and trust in local government.



Recognising outstanding reporting of issues of importance to culturally diverse communities and reporting that contributes to Victorians' improved cross-cultural understanding.

#### Winners

#### **SAARI** Collective

The SAARI Collective is a new media start-up that builds the capacity of emerging South Asian Australian writers. Since July 2021, they have published the works of over 50 South Asian writers on issues that matter to the South Asian community, including racism, representation, gender equality, family dynamics, mental health, heart disease, family violence, arts and culture, science, COVID-19, climate change, and international affairs.

#### **STEM Sisters**

STEM Sisters publish a quarterly digital magazine, MAGNIFY, that highlights the importance of diversity and inclusion in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) in Australia, and increases representation and recognition by portraying women scientists with diverse cultural identities.

#### **Highly Commended**

#### **Catherine Jonathan**

Catherine founded Emerging Brand Africa public relations agency and EmBA Magazine, both of which are dedicated to raising the profile of African-Australian people and businesses. Her mission is to rebrand the African narrative and increase awareness of positive stories while showcasing the rich African culture, and its contributions and successes in Australia.

#### Harrison Tippet

Harrison amplified the voices of the Hazara community in his work as a reporter for the Geelong Advertiser, bringing attention to the reignited turmoil in Afghanistan. In his stories from the community, he drew attention to the ongoing political situation and allowed readers to empathise with a local community who were directly impacted by international events.



Recognising outstanding contributions to multicultural harmony in the field of policing.

#### Winners – Police Annual Multicultural Award

#### Patti Hiras

Patti fostered positive and meaningful relationships between Victoria Police and Victoria's Greek community, with a special emphasis on the services delivery needs of seniors and those with disability.

#### Senior Sergeant Ron Klajnblat

From Caufield Police Station, Senior Sergeant Klajnblat played a significant role in strengthening the ties and understanding between Victoria Police and the Jewish community with a special emphasis on providing culturally sensitive police services around safety and security.

#### Sergeant Amanda Fahey

With more than 30 years' of experience as a police officer, Sergeant Fahey has shown strong leadership as a Police Mentor for the Victoria Police Diversity Recruitment Program, established to support African Australian's to become Victoria Police employees.

#### Detective Senior Constable Edmond Shkembi

Since arriving to Australia as a refuee in 2000, Detective Senior Constable Shkembi has made outstanding achievements. Through readily sharing his language and cultural skills, Edmond has strengthened the understanding and relationship between the Victoria Police and the Albanian community.

#### Winner – Multicultural Media Award

#### "STOPIT" (The Public Transport Passenger Notification Project)

The Public Transport Passenger Notification project, known as STOPIT, is part of the Transit Safety Division's 'Strategy for addressing sex offences on public transport'. The service is available in 12 languages and set a new bar for ensuring that Victoria Police tools, services and information are accessible to multicultural communities.

#### Winners – Police Community Exemplary Award

#### Victoria Police Multifaith Chaplaincy

Victoria Police Chaplaincy focusses on engaging with the broad spectrum of faith communities and has representation and inclusion of the major faiths within their team. Their purpose is to ensure chaplaincy is a diverse and inclusive offering of pastoral and spiritual care to anyone and everyone within the Victoria Police family and veteran community.

#### KOMAK (Uniting)

'Komak' means 'help' or 'support' in Dari and is a specialised service that champions the Afghan community. KOMAK provides continued support, understanding and guidance to local Dandenong Police in the development of programmes that aim to help local Afghani community members feel safe, supported, and included in the wider community.

#### Victoria Police and Jewish Community Day

As part of Cultural Diversity Week, Caulfield Police partnered with the local Jewish community to put together a Victoria Police and Jewish Community Day. The event focused on building trust, confidence and positive relationships between the local Jewish community and police.

#### Winners – Protective Service Officer Multicultural Award

#### PSO Yasac Abdullahi

In his role as a PSO, Yasac forges positive relationships between Victoria Police and the Somali community. He is a role model for his community, and is former Co-Founder and President of AMSSA Youth Connect, a not-for-profit organisation that aims to ensure young migrants and refugees have a supportive network.

#### **PSO Aamer Kiani**

Since becoming a PSO in 2014, Aamer has built positive working relationships with a number of multicultural communities, particularly the Islamic community. He is especially supportive of young multicultural Victorians considering a career in Victoria Police.



Recognising an individual or organisation that has made a significant contribution to increasing understanding, acceptance and cooperation between different faith and cultural groups.

#### Winner

#### Maria Dimopoulos

Maria has been a passionate advocate for multicultural communities for over 30 years, influencing policy and real change at all levels of government, especially in the areas of gender equity, justice and dialogue between Victoria's myriad cultural, faith and Indigenous groups.



Recognising people and organisations that support or advocate for the rights and needs of newly arrived refugees and asylum seekers, improve access to settlement services and/or employment pathways, and create opportunities for participation, contribution and belonging.

#### Winners

#### Swan Hill Uniting Church Community Issues Group

Swan Hill Uniting Church Community Issues Group has worked with Afghani Refugees for over 20 years. They support newly arrived refugees and asylum seekers through welcome nights, social gatherings , a Men's Group, a Woman's Group, referral to local services and facilitation of English language classes.

#### Major Road Projects Victoria, Level Crossing Removal Project and Swinburne University of Technology

The Engineering Pathway Industry Cadetship (EPIC) program removes barriers and creates employment and training opportunities for qualified engineers who arrived in Australia as refugees and asylum seekers and want to start careers in Victoria's major transport infrastructure projects.

#### **Highly Commended**

#### Helping Hand Refugee Youth Mentoring Project

The Helping Hand Refugee Youth Project supports newly arrived young refugees in Moonee Valley, Maribyrnong and Melbourne to live independently and address social isolation and low literacy. Project Mentors offer young people language and study support, service referrals and pathways to work or further education.

#### **Bounce Program**

The Bounce Program is a grassroots refugee youth mentoring program based in Melbourne. For over ten years, the program has promoted the social inclusion, participation and empowerment of newly arrived and settled young refugees by connecting them with mentors, service providers and the wider community.



Recognising people and organisations that develop and implement sporting programs that aim to build social cohesion and harmony across communities.

#### Winners

#### Karen Block

Karen Block is Senior Research Fellow at the University of Melbourne, and on the project team of Standing Together Against Racism in Sports. This project is the first of its kind in Australia and aims to make sporting clubs more accessible to young people with migrant and refugee backgrounds through cultural awareness training, bystander training and club policy development.

#### Chandramarakkalage Anton Roshan Sampath Silva

Roshan is the founder of the All Saints Basketball and Netball Club, with 665 members representing 13 faith groups and 41 nationalities. Roshan has developed more than 500 teams and coached more than 500 games. Under his leadership, the club has promoted cultural diversity and intercultural understanding within sport.

#### **Highly Commended**

#### Hockey Victoria

Hockey Victoria's new strategic plan focuses on fostering a "Game for All, for Life." A special focus has aimed to increase participation from Victorians with an Indian background, through understanding the needs of this community and ensuring clubs are culturally and religiously inclusive.



Recognising the outstanding contributions of a young person, group or organisation that provides leadership, empowerment and support to young Victorians from culturally diverse backgrounds.

#### Winners

#### Zainab Abou-Eid

Zainab is an advocate for the rights and inclusion of young Muslims living in Victoria. Her work includes organising sports programs, presenting on cultural diversity to students, and as volunteering for the Youth Press Gallery. Zainab has held positions on the Moreland Youth Committee, Multicultural Youth Network, Victoria Police Youth Summit and as a youth community leader for the Islamic Council of Victoria.

#### Altaf Hussein

Altaf is founder and chairman of the Victorian Afghan Youth Association, a public speaker, mental health advocate, and founder of a Dari language school. He strives to build the mental, social, and community health of Victoria's Afghan- Australian youth through civic engagement, community leadership and mentorship.

#### **Highly Commended**

#### Hashwina Vimalarajan

Hashwina is an advocate for key issues impacting young people with migrant and refugee backgrounds through her work for the Centre for Multicultural Youth. Her work spans stakeholder engagement, internal advisory work, project design, public speaking, facilitating leadership workshops and development work.

#### Ali Al Battaat

Ali advocates for multicultural young people through founding the Youth of Colour and Culture group, participating in a My New Neighbour campaign, being an anti-racism Ambassador of Amnesty International and volunteering in Greater Shepparton. He is passionate about mental health and co-designing programs for high school students dealing with bullying and other personal struggles.

# Building a brighter future for all.

We take great pride in our commitment to support multicultural communities, celebrating and honouring their vibrant heritages alongside them.

We recognise the importance of creating better experiences for our customers through understanding their needs, fostering empathy and understanding by deepening relationships, enhancing financial inclusion and promoting social cohesion so our customers feel supported.

We bring to life our purpose by ensuring strong grassroots and authentic engagement, developing strong networks and relationships, forming strategic partnerships with government, multicultural bodies and communities and delivering meaningful and relevant community programs.

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#### Victorian Multicultural Commission

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VICTORIAN multicultural commission strengthening our community

