

MULTICULTURAL FILM FESTIVAL 2025



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VICTORIAN
multicultural
commission
strengthening our community



SPOTLIGHT ON REFUGEE WEEK: A POWERFUL CELEBRATION OF DIVERSE STORYTELLING

This year's Multicultural Film Festival (MFF) shines a light on powerful narratives of resilience and hope, aligning with Refugee Week from 15–21 June.

As part of this celebration, the Victorian Multicultural Commission has proudly introduced a new highlight that has been built on the tradition of the Chairperson's Choice Awards: the inaugural *Chairperson's Refugee Stories Award* — recognising compelling storytelling by and about people from refugee backgrounds.

Refugee Week is a time to honour the journeys of those who have sought safety and a new beginning in Australia. It's also a chance to

acknowledge the richness refugees bring to our cultural tapestry through their lived experiences, creativity, and contributions.

By sharing these stories, we deepen our understanding, foster empathy, and build stronger, more inclusive communities. The MFF's spotlight on refugee voices invites all Victorians to engage with these narratives, not just during Refugee Week, but year-round.

We're proud to launch this year's festival during Refugee Week and invite everyone to join us in celebrating World Refugee Day on Friday 20 June 2025 — a moment to listen, reflect, and connect.



**Refugee
Week**

Coordinated by
Refugee Council of Australia

15 - 21 June 2025

**Finding Freedom:
Diversity in Community**



refugeeweek.org.au | [#RefugeeWeekAU](https://twitter.com/RefugeeWeekAU)

Arozo, Negin and John (L-R) are former refugees from Afghanistan.

Read what finding freedom means to them at refugeeweek.org.au. Photography by Damon AMB.

ORDER OF PROCEEDINGS



FORMALITIES COMMENCE

Afghan performance

by Dance Workshop for Young Women of Refugee Background

Master of Ceremonies Welcome

by Najma Sambul

Acknowledgement of Country

Chairperson's Address

by Vivienne Nguyen AM, Chairperson, Victorian Multicultural Commission

PREMIERE SCREENING

of selected short films from the Official Selection

AWARD PRESENTATIONS

Best Victorian Short Fiction Film

sponsored by Swinburne University of Technology

Best Victorian Short Non-Fiction Film

sponsored by The Bruce Wong Foundation

Best National Short Film

sponsored by SBS

Best International Short Film

sponsored by Segmento

Chairperson's Refugee Stories Award

sponsored by the Victorian Multicultural Commission

People's Choice Award for Best Victorian Short Film

sponsored by The University of Melbourne

EVENT CONCLUDES

MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER FOR MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS



Welcome to the premiere screening of the 2025 Multicultural Film Festival!

This celebration of stories from around the globe is a showcase of diversity and recognises the talents of both established and emerging filmmakers.

The Victorian Multicultural Commission, in partnership with Swinburne University of Technology, has curated a program which will entertain, educate and inspire.

The Film Festival premieres during Refugee Week. With a spotlight on Victorian, Australian and international cinema, the festival serves as a moving tribute to the creative and cultural contributions of refugees, asylum seekers, migrants, and First Nations peoples. I have no doubt that this year's program of short films will not only entertain but also provoke thought and foster intercultural dialogue.

I want to extend my congratulations to the talented filmmakers. Your passion and creativity fosters intercultural awareness through storytelling – an art that cultivates empathy, understanding and human connection.

Ingrid Stitt MP

Minister for Multicultural Affairs

MESSAGE FROM THE VICTORIAN MULTICULTURAL COMMISSION CHAIRPERSON



We are pleased to present the premiere screening of the 2025 Multicultural Film Festival (MFF), a flagship initiative of the Victorian Multicultural Commission (VMC).

Tonight, we celebrate culturally and linguistically diverse filmmakers worldwide. This event would not be possible without the significant and long-standing partnership of Swinburne University of Technology, our key delivery partner for many years.

We are also delighted to collaborate with our Major Partner Commonwealth Bank, and other valued sponsors including SBS, The University of Melbourne, Department of Transport and Planning, Intersect Global Partners, Segmento, Australian Multicultural Foundation, LanguageLoop, My Holistic Care, Victorian Electoral Commission, Stonemart, Louvre Elite, Foot Solutions, RMIT University, S&J Media Group, SAE University College, in bringing this vibrant festival to the prestigious Australian Centre for the Moving Image (ACMI). Together, we are amplifying the voices of multicultural communities and encouraging more representation on screen and behind-the-scenes.

A platform such as MFF provides filmmakers with greater public exposure and career growth opportunities. The program is also designed to enrich audiences by offering unique and creative viewpoints, influenced by heritage and diverse countries of origin.

From the 1,275 submissions received this year from 98 countries, I congratulate all the filmmakers – especially those in the Official Selection – for their efforts and achievements. We're thrilled to see the festival tour to other destinations including Bunjil Place, Federation Square, the Mornington Peninsula Shire as well as being broadcast via SBS on Demand.

With a special focus on Victorian filmmaking, and with Australia as home to the world's oldest continuous cultures and people from more than 300 ancestries around the world, it is so exciting to be screening a program of insightful cinema with culture at its core.

I wish you a challenging, moving and richly rewarding MFF.

Vivienne Nguyen AM

Chairperson, Victorian Multicultural Commission

MESSAGE FROM SWINBURNE UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY



Swinburne's Departments of Film and Television and Humanities and Social Sciences are delighted to partner with the Victorian Multicultural Commission on the Multicultural Film Festival in 2025.

We are thrilled to present a variety of engaging, energetic and provocative short films. We thank the VMC for their ongoing support of filmmakers, and their generosity and foresight in supporting the important research that underpins the festival.

Our interdisciplinary project *Zooming In: Multiculturalism through the Lens of the Next Generation* is exploring contemporary multiculturalism through the eyes of emerging filmmakers. In *Reel Change*, we are investigating how film can combat racism in regional communities. We're also documenting the spike in racism targeting Asian Australians during the COVID-19 pandemic in Victoria.

Dr Vincent Giarrusso

Lecturer, Department of Film and Television

Vincent is an award-winning musician, filmmaker, and academic. His creative practice, teaching and research is underpinned by an emphasis on social cohesion and cultural issues.

Dr Glenda Ballantyne

Senior Lecturer, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences

Glenda is a sociologist passionate about innovative, interdisciplinary research that explores multiculturalism and fosters intercultural dialogue, connection, and a shared sense of belonging across diverse communities.

Dr Atalanti Dionysus

2025 Multicultural Film Festival Project Manager

Atalanti is an award-winning interdisciplinary filmmaker with over 20 years' experience in immersive storytelling, creative production, and project management. She has delivered complex, site-specific screen and XR project initiatives across cultural and educational sectors.

FRIENDS OF THE MULTICULTURAL FILM FESTIVAL

The VMC has partnered with a network of experienced filmmakers and industry professionals who have become Friends of the MFF. These passionate advocates are committed to championing diverse storytelling and supporting the next generation of emerging talent across Australia's vibrant screen industry.



Atong Atem – Artist and writer

Atong Atem is a South Sudanese artist and writer from Bor living in Narm Melbourne. Her work explores postcolonial practices in the diaspora primarily working with photography and video.



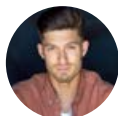
Helen Kapalos – Journalist and former VMC Chairperson

Appointed as the VMC's Chairperson, from 2015 to 2019, Helen Kapalos is one of Australia's most respected broadcasters, a seasoned communications leader and an award-winning documentary filmmaker.



John Safran – Writer and filmmaker

John Safran is known for his bold explorations of culture, faith, and society. He has won numerous awards for his impactful documentaries, and TV series. His latest book is *Squat: A Week Squatting at Kanye's Mansion*.



Josh Piterman – Performer and author

Josh Piterman is the author of *Behind the Mask* and the only Australian to play both the roles of Jean Valjean in *Les Misérables* and The Phantom in the brilliant original production of *The Phantom of the Opera* on London's West End.



Ra Chapman – Creator, writer and actor

Ra Chapman is a Korean-Australian writer and actor whose work spans film, television, and theatre. Ra garnered a 2025 Australian Writers Guild (AWGIE) Award nomination for her TV comedy series *White Fever*.



Tig Terera – Writer and director

Born in Zimbabwe and raised in Australia, Tig Terera's debut TV series, *SWIFT STREET*, which he created, wrote and directed (episodes 1-4), was funded by SBS and Magpie Pictures.

AWARDS CATEGORIES

BEST VICTORIAN SHORT FICTION FILM

sponsored by Swinburne University of Technology

Short fiction films created by Victorian producers, directors, writers, or actors.

BEST VICTORIAN SHORT NON-FICTION FILM

sponsored by The Bruce Wong Foundation

Short non-fiction films (e.g., documentaries) created by Victorian producers, directors, writers, or actors.

PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARD FOR BEST VICTORIAN SHORT FILM

sponsored by The University of Melbourne

To be chosen by the audience via live voting at the premiere screening.
Selected from Victorian films in the Official Selection.

BEST NATIONAL SHORT FILM

sponsored by SBS

Short films from across Australia in any genre (fiction, non-fiction, animation, music video, or other).

BEST INTERNATIONAL SHORT FILM

sponsored by Segmento

Short films from outside Australia, in any genre (fiction, non-fiction, animation, music video, or other).

CHAIRPERSON'S REFUGEE STORIES AWARD

sponsored by the Victorian Multicultural Commission

Short films addressing refugee or asylum seeker experiences in any genre (fiction, non-fiction, animation, music video, or other). This category is open to filmmakers nationally and internationally and selected by the VMC Chairperson.

SELECTION PANEL



The Victorian Multicultural Commission would like to express its gratitude to the 2025 Multicultural Film Festival selection panel members for their time and expertise.

Dr Adrian Danks

Associate Professor, Cinema Studies and Media, RMIT University

Angela Barnett

Outdoor Screen Coordinator, Bunjil Place, City of Casey

David Balfour

Head of Film and Television, Victorian College of the Arts,
The University of Melbourne

Dr Glenda Ballantyne

Senior Lecturer, Sociology, Swinburne University of Technology

Isabelle Beaupré

Head of Creative Diversity, SBS

Krushnadevsinh Ravalji

Youth Commissioner, Victorian Multicultural Commission

Sunny Liu

Campaigns and Engagement Advisor, Study Melbourne

Dr Vincent Giarrusso

Lecturer, Film, Games and Animation, Swinburne University of Technology

Vivienne Nguyen AM

Chairperson, Victorian Multicultural Commission

Xenia Sanut

Policy Officer, Multicultural Affairs, Department of Premier and Cabinet;
Executive Committee Member, VPS Women of Colour Network

OFFICIAL SELECTION



CHUPARROSA

Directed and written by:

Felipe de Jesús Godoy Castillo

Produced by: Luis Flores

Key cast: Justo Rodríguez and
Adriana Rovira

State: Michoacán

Country: Mexico

Bitten by a rattle snake, Martin dies just as he crosses the border. A hummingbird helps him emerge from the darkness of death to embark on a journey through the land where he was born and reunite with his loved ones before winter arrives. *Chuparrosa* is an experimental meditation on liminal spaces, borders, family and love.



COMPANION

Directed, written and produced by:

Alireza Memariani

Key cast: Ali Zahedi and
Ghanbar (pigeon)

State: Tehran

Country: Islamic Republic of Iran

A true story about a man and his bird, *Companion* is a gentle exploration of friendship that transcends human boundaries. Told with poetic and cinematic overtones, the man and his bird are observed traveling through time and space.



DANCE WITH PRIDE

Directed and written by:

Javier Cataño-Gonzalez

Produced by: Jorge Luis Cruzado

Key cast: Wendy Nedd

State: Victoria

Country: Australia

A film about the transformative journey of a Colombian dancer at Victoria's Pride Street Party. Wendy Nedd embarks on a transformative journey, where movement takes on multiple meanings. As she navigates the challenges of immigration, both physical and emotional, she finds strength through dance.



ECHOES OF HOME

Directed, written and produced by:

Reza Taherabadi

Key cast: Mahyar Osanlouy

State: New South Wales

Country: Australia

A moving film that follows Arash, a recent refugee in Australia, exploring the psychological toll of displacement. Arash is haunted by the fear of losing his visa and the impossibility of returning to Iran. His nightmares and anxiety blur the line between dreams and reality threatening to consume him in existential malaise. A poignant reflection on the refugee experience, the film captures the silent battles fought by those who have left everything behind and remain caught between two worlds.



GABRIEL

Directed and written by:

Kevin Duran Du

Produced by: Moly Sizer

Key cast: Adam Emanuel Zammit,
Daniel Masini and Connor Macdonald

State: Victoria

Country: Australia

Gabriel, a recent immigrant, grapples with employment and whether to show his nationality on his resume. He sets out to find a job but is daunted by language and social barriers. An unpleasant encounter prompts him to reflect on his family and the cultural and societal values they instilled in him.



HOSH BULDUK: A TURKISH MIGRATION STORY

Directed, written and produced by:

Kuranda Seyfi Seyit

State: Victoria

Country: Australia

A documentary that chronicles the migration of 8,000 Turkish migrants to Victoria between 1968 - 1974, following their journey of settlement and the positive contributions to local communities.



HOUSEKEEPERS

Directed and written by:

Kaede Miyamura

Produced by: Anna Warwick and
Evangeline Parks

Key cast: Shion Chenhall and
Chie Maruyama

State: Victoria

Country: Australia

A tween's childhood comes to a premature end when her non-English speaking mother is sacked from her job, forever changing the dynamic of their parent-child relationship. *Housekeepers* is told from the perspective of the daughter and her struggles. Faced with challenging choices and interrogations of the matriarch, the protagonist explores the effects of immigration in their family history.



MECHANICAL RESONANCE

Directed, written and produced by:

Juejun Chen

Key cast: Juejun Chen

State: Kassel

Country: Germany

A reflective and experimental documentary, *Mechanical Resonance* explores the relentlessness of dancer training and the effects on the body. Following a dancer who remembers the stringent training as a child, she discovers dance is imprinted on her body, bringing back memories from her childhood.



NGADJURI

Directed and produced by:

Quenten Agius and Kim Mavromatis

Written by: Quenten Agius

Key cast: Quenten Agius

State: South Australia

Country: Australia

The film explores the meaning of being Aboriginal, as the First Peoples of this nation. A collaboration from Ngadjuri country, the mid north and southern Flinders Ranges in South Australia, the film incorporates 10 years of archival material from multiple cameras and drones to provide majestic imagery of the sacred region.



OLD FACES

Directed and written by:

Tamir Anshtein

Produced by: Tamir Anshtein and Zack Licenblat

Key cast: Albert Goikhman, Max Nappo, Alexandra Jones and Alex Solomonovich

State: Victoria

Country: Australia

A Jewish Soviet prisoner, who yearns to see his children one final time, suddenly wakes up in Modern Melbourne, Australia. The film is a meditation on the immigration and diasporic experience, examining alienation, confusion and homesickness from the perspective of those who are displaced. The film explores how traditional communities grapple with assimilation and misunderstanding, forcing them to decide which aspects of their identity they can afford to change and what they must preserve.



OUTPICKER

Directed and written by: Le Luo

Produced by: Feifei Liao

Key cast: Jing Yang

State: Victoria

Country: Australia

Outpicker is an environmental documentary that focusses on queer immigrant, Jing, who finds a sense of belonging in Australia through litter picking. The film explores Jing's actions in waste minimalisation, and his involvement in community organising through his interactions with multicultural queer women in Victoria.



STILL

Directed and written by:

Cornelius Marco

Produced by: Adrian Dias

Key cast: Peter Jiang and

Rebekah Lin

State: Victoria

Country: Australia

Still is set in a post-COVID world, where subsets of generations are presented with a new digital anxiety. The film follows an immigrant who lives in isolation and embarks on a street photography competition. The subject of the story is driven by contradictory ideas of passion and success, exacerbated by the digital noise that surrounds him. The film is a reflection on stillness, overstimulation, connection and passion.



THE WAY TO FREEDOM

Directed by:

Hussam Saraf and Darryl McConnell

Written by: Hussam Saraf

Produced by: Darryl McConnell

Key cast: Kayla Doncon, students and staff from Greater Shepparton Secondary College

State: Victoria

Country: Australia

A documentary that follows the journey of refugees fleeing war torn countries in search of safety and a new life in Australia. The film chronicles the experiences of local immigrants in Greater Shepparton as they take their first steps upon arrival to years of integrating in the community. Through intimate interviews and storytelling, we hear of their hope, resilience and strength and the transformative power of education and community in creating a path to freedom.



THE WHITE LIMBO

Directed by: Ali Vaziri

Written and produced by:

Ali Vaziri and Paulo Mousicci

Key cast: Baha Jamali, Marjan Lotfali, Shayan Askari, Ali Elhamimanesh, Delaram Admadi and Ali Vaziri

State: New South Wales

Country: Australia

An asylum seeker, who is waiting for a protection visa, witnesses the loss of his loved ones. This hard-hitting film is visceral in its impact, dealing with difficult issues of migration, bureaucracy and the dehumanisation of the migrant through the administrative process.



YOU ARE MY TOMORROW

Directed and written by: Lara Köse

Produced by: William Duan and Molly O'Connor

Key cast: Melissa Kahraman and Ayşe Altunkılıç

State: Victoria

Country: Australia

You are my Tomorrow is a deeply personal reflection. It follows the story of Esra, a young ambitious art student, who is forced to care for her mentally unstable mother. The weight of responsibility, and deeply ingrained cultural values, ensnares Esra in an oppressive pattern of endless caregiving and duty. An intimate and challenging portrait of intergenerational trauma in immigrant families.

PRIZES

Prizes of \$2,000 AUD have been generously donated by each of the following organisations to the winning filmmakers:

Swinburne University of Technology

The Bruce Wong Foundation

SBS

Segmento

The University of Melbourne

Victorian Multicultural Commission

All award-winning films will receive an online industry professional development session with SBS representatives.

All Victorian award-winning films will receive several Melbourne International Film Festival Memberships.



The bank that helps make Australia your home.

At Commonwealth Bank, we take pride in our commitment to support multicultural communities by celebrating their heritage and recognising their vital role in driving innovation and strength in our economy.

As the bank of choice for many people arriving in Australia, we offer personalised banking services designed to help meet the needs of the diverse communities we serve. With bilingual staff in some of our branches and access to Australia's best banking app, we ensure that our customers have the right tools, resources and programs to confidently navigate their financial journey.

Together we are dedicated to building an inclusive future for all our customers – where everyone feels welcome, supported and empowered.

Q CommBank Moving to Australia

Largest bank by market capitalisation as at June 2024. Based on CommBank Migrant DIP report Jan 24.
Canstar 2024 Digital Banking Bank of the Year. 2025 Commonwealth Bank of Australia ABN 48 123 123 124.



Victorian Multicultural Awards for Excellence 2025

Recognising individuals and organisations making a real difference in fostering cross-cultural understanding and supporting people from migrant, refugee, and asylum seeker backgrounds across Victoria.

Help us shine a light on the inspiring contributions that make our state a richer, more connected place for all.



Know someone making an impact?

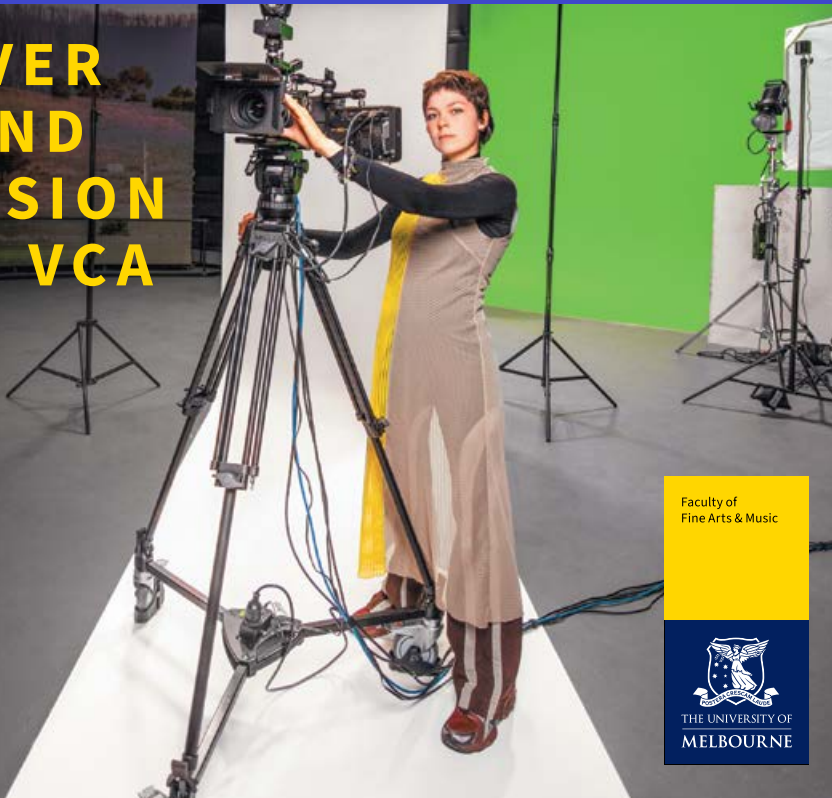
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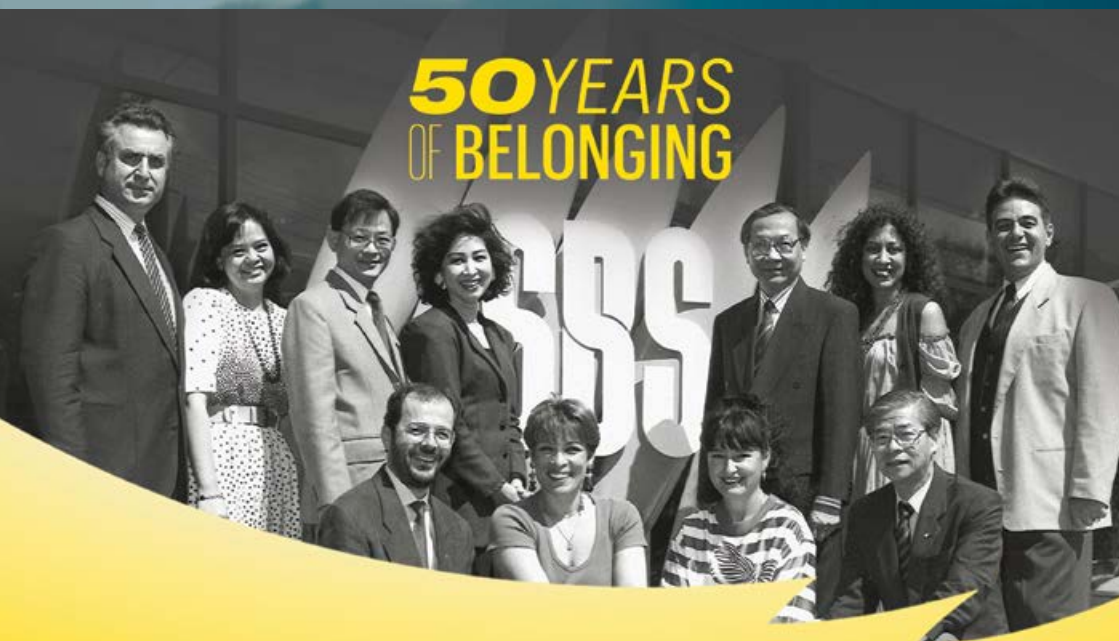
Cultural and
Inclusion
focused events
support

Training
solutions in
inclusion,
equity and
anti-racism

Inclusive
leadership
performance
support and
training
(mentoring,
coaching)

Evaluation
and
research

Resources
development
and review



In 2025, SBS celebrates 50 years of telling bold human stories and providing essential services that reflect and include all Australians.



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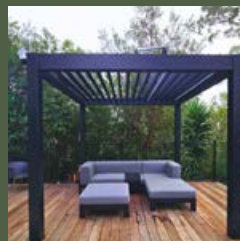


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call us on 131 832 or

(03) 9209 0112 for another language



Language Loop

Turning Words Into Possibilities

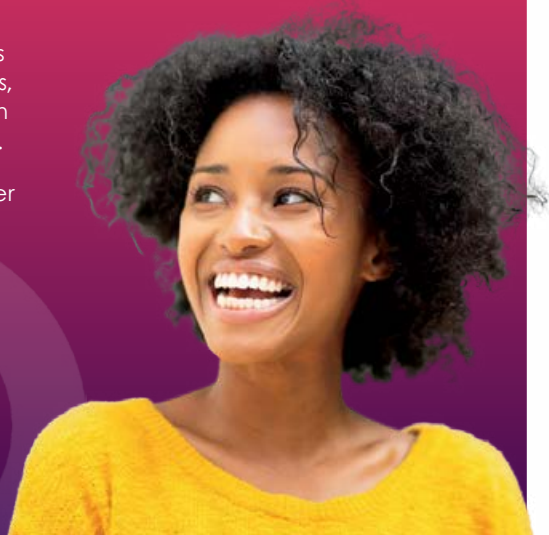


Since 1975, LanguageLoop has been Australia's trusted provider of essential multilingual services, turning words into possibilities by breaking down language barriers and fostering understanding.

As a government business enterprise, we partner with organisations to connect them with their communities through our wide range of interpreting and translating services.



See what's possible



THANK YOU



The Victorian Multicultural Commission would like to acknowledge and thank the following partners for their support in delivering the Multicultural Film Festival 2025.

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PROMOTION PARTNERS



ABOUT THE VICTORIAN MULTICULTURAL COMMISSION (VMC)

The Victorian Multicultural Commission plays a critical role in strengthening cultural diversity in Victoria through consultation, advocacy, celebration and promotion.

Established in 1983 and constituted under the *Multicultural Victoria Act 2011*, the VMC, comprising of 12 Commissioners, is a statutory authority that acts as a vital conduit between the state's culturally, religiously and linguistically diverse communities and the Victorian Government.

The VMC connects multicultural communities with the government (and government with community) by engaging directly with people to understand issues. Together, they identify and recommend potential solutions to make public services more inclusive and accessible for culturally diverse Victorians.

The VMC is a trusted voice: connecting, empowering, influencing and providing platforms for social cohesion and advocacy. The VMC is dedicated to fostering unity, nurturing intercultural and interfaith dialogue and showcasing the many cultures that shape our Victorian identity.

The VMC is committed to positive and mutually beneficial partnerships. We welcome the opportunity to discuss sponsorship opportunities by contacting communications@vmc.vic.gov.au.

The 2025 Multicultural Film Festival has been delivered by the Victorian Multicultural Commission:

Vivienne Nguyen AM
Bwe Thay
Kashif Bouns
Paul Bateman
Jessie Robson
Nardia Brancatisano
Yusuf Liban

Sophia Sourris
Nazer Nazir
Katherine Murtagh
Tizita Yohannes
Robert Gruhn
Parsu Sharma Luitai
Masoud Navvabi

Thank you to our RMIT University interns for assisting on this project:

Abdallah Murtuza
Linh Nguyen Le Phuong
Rachel Nguyen

MULTICULTURAL FILM FESTIVAL 2025

ON TOUR

The Victorian Multicultural Commission is excited to announce the Multicultural Film Festival will go on tour throughout Victoria!

View the screening dates and times at various locations below and help spread the word for more audiences to enjoy the program across the state.

**Bunjil Place
Narre Warren**

Saturday 26 July
4:30pm – 7:00pm

**The University of Melbourne
Shepparton campus**

Friday 15 August
5:30pm – 7:30pm

**RMIT University
Melbourne campus**

Thursday 25 September
5:30pm – 7:30pm

**Rosebud Cinema
Mornington Peninsula Shire**

Saturday 18 October
4:00pm – 6:30pm

**Federation Square
outdoor screen**

Thursday 30 October
6:00pm – 8:06pm

SBS on Demand

Monday 10 November
online for 12 months

**SCAN THE QR CODE
FOR MORE INFORMATION**



VOTE FOR YOUR FAVOURITE VICTORIAN SHORT FILM



At the premiere screening, the People's Choice Award for Best Victorian Short Film sponsored by The University of Melbourne will be awarded to the film that receives the highest number of votes.

Scan the QR code to choose your favourite Victorian film!

Victorian Multicultural Commission

multiculturalcommission.vic.gov.au

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