

# 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](http://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](http://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

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## PREMIERE SCREENING

of selected short films from the Official Selection

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## 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

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## 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.

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## **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.

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## **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.

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## **BEST NATIONAL SHORT FILM**

sponsored by SBS

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

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## **BEST INTERNATIONAL SHORT FILM**

sponsored by Segmento

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

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## **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:** Molly 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 her involvement in community organising through her 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.

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# 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?

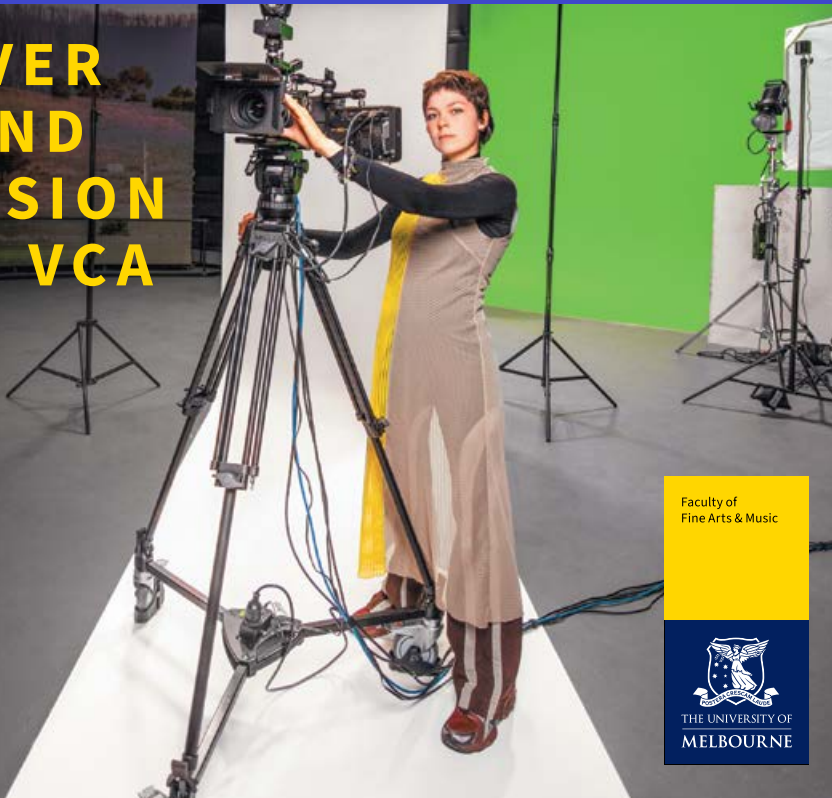
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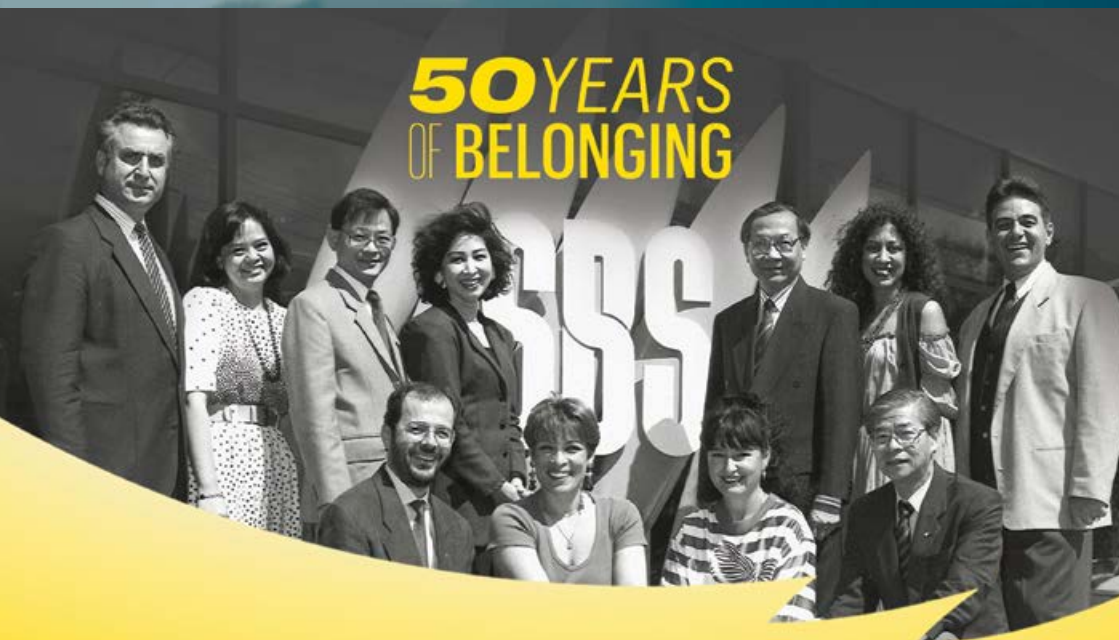
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focused events  
support

Training  
solutions in  
inclusion,  
equity and  
anti-racism

Inclusive  
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training  
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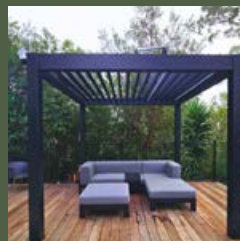


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## Language Loop

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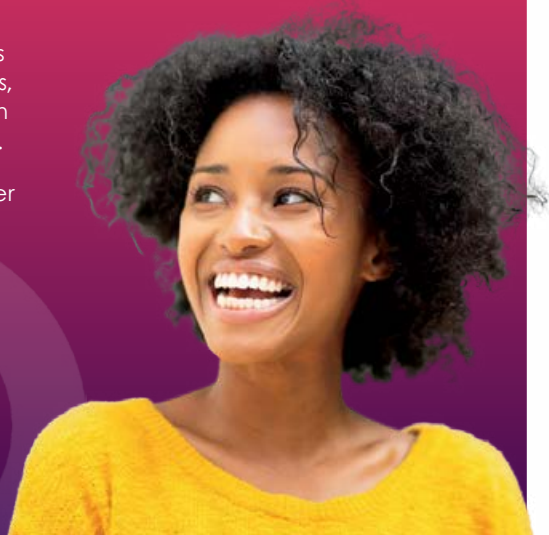


Since 1975, LanguageLoop has been Australia's trusted provider of essential multilingual services, turning words into possibilities by breaking down language barriers and fostering understanding.

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



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# 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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# 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](mailto: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 and 8:00pm

### **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](http://multiculturalcommission.vic.gov.au)

[contact@vmc.vic.gov.au](mailto:contact@vmc.vic.gov.au)

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