



Victorian Multicultural Commission

Annual Report 2024-25



Acknowledgment of Country

The Victorian Multicultural Commission acknowledges the First Peoples and traditional custodians of the land we now call Victoria. We acknowledge the ongoing spiritual, cultural and material connection of all First Peoples to land, water, skies and resources. We pay our respects to Elders past and present.

The Victorian Multicultural Commission supports continued steps towards reconciliation, and the right of First Peoples to participate in decision making that affects them.

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Message from the Chairperson



I am pleased to present the Victorian Multicultural Commission (VMC) 2024–25 Annual Report. The report captures a busy year of challenges and achievements, across a vast range of activities and communities.

At the heart of our efforts are the trusted, respectful and candid relationships that the VMC and our Commissioners have forged with communities, government and departments. This trust enables the VMC to bring different stakeholders together to collaborate on initiatives, address challenges, and advise government departments on public policies and legislation.

It has been a challenging year on several fronts, one of which is the impact of global conflicts on local communities. We have seen the rise of unacceptable behaviour by individuals, and I hope with the legislative changes ahead they will be held to account.

In times of such difficulties, it is ever more important that we listen to the voices of these communities, facilitate safe spaces to listen and hold each other's emotions and pain with care and empathy.

Leaders from all walks of life must also engage and re-engage to find a better path forward: a path that is safe, inclusive and full of understanding and respect.

At the federal level, we've seen the release of the Multicultural Framework Review and the National Anti-Racism Framework by the Australian Human Rights Commission. In Victoria, we've seen the launch of Victoria's first ever Anti-Racism Strategy, a five-year plan to prevent and address racism and discrimination.

Victoria also commenced the Victorian Multicultural Review, led by George Lekakis AO and his expert advisory group. The VMC looks forward to understanding the insights presented to the Victorian Government to ensure—now and into the future—that Victoria's policies, institutions and programs better reflect and support the needs of our multicultural and multifaith communities.



Victorian Multicultural Festival 2025



Cultural Diversity Week 2025

I extend my sincere appreciation to Minister Ingrid Stitt and her staff for their continuing commitment and collaboration with the VMC to promote Victoria's diversity.

I am grateful for the Regional Advisory Councils, the Multifaith Advisory Group and the Multicultural Youth Network for their ongoing commitment to building equitable, inclusive multicultural and multifaith communities.

I thank my fellow Commissioners for their steadfast dedication to multiculturalism in Victoria and the work of the VMC. A special thank you to the Deputy Chairperson, Bwe Thay, whose passion, dedication and hard work is an asset to the VMC.

I extend this thanks to the staff at the VMC, whose unwavering work makes it possible to deliver on its objectives and functions.

I would also like to thank our colleagues at Multicultural Affairs in the Department of Premier and Cabinet, and other departments and

agencies. Collaboration, built on respectful working relationships, is key to ensuring the Victorian Government can deliver the best possible outcomes for Victoria's diverse communities.

The VMC fundamentally believes that our differences make us stronger and that Victoria prospers through its diversity. The VMC hopes our work inspires others to champion inclusivity, embrace diversity, and continue to build a Victoria that is welcoming and vibrant for all.

Vivienne Nguyen AM
Chairperson, Victorian
Multicultural Commission

About the Victorian Multicultural Commission

The Victorian Multicultural Commission (VMC) supports and advocates for culturally, religiously and linguistically diverse Victorians.

The VMC was established in 1983 as a statutory body. It is legislated under the *Multicultural Victoria Act 2011* (Vic).

The VMC's work:

- ▶ promotes cultural diversity across all areas of society
- ▶ advocates on behalf of multicultural communities to all levels of government
- ▶ encourages full participation by all Victorians, regardless of their cultural, linguistic and religious backgrounds.

The VMC provides an important link between communities and the Victorian Government. It fosters social cohesion and promotes cultural diversity using a strengths-based approach. It emphasises the importance of genuine community engagement and community-based solutions.

The VMC promotes the cultural, social and economic benefits of multiculturalism. This includes advocating for tangible, systemic change within government departments and agencies, for example, on:

- ▶ the effects of global conflicts on diaspora communities in Victoria
- ▶ prioritising multicultural communities in the design and delivery of anti-racism, family violence and mental health services.

Furthermore, the VMC helps to improve public services to ensure they are more culturally inclusive and accessible for everyone.

The VMC's primary stakeholders include:

- ▶ multicultural and multifaith communities (organisations, service providers, peak bodies, faith groups, businesses and individuals)
- ▶ the Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Victorian Government departments, agencies, statutory bodies and other commissions.

Mission statement

We strengthen our community through support, celebrations and advocacy for culturally and linguistically diverse Victorians.



Cultural Diversity Week 2025

Year at a glance



480

attendees at the Victorian
Multicultural Gala Dinner held in
Geelong



300+

attendees at the VMC
End-of-Year Event



67

awards distributed at the
Victorian Multicultural Awards for
Excellence at Government House



50,000+

interactions from the
#CDW2025 user-generated
social media campaign



26,000

social media followers and 5,500
subscribers to the VMC's weekly
update



9,687

visitors to the Victorian
Multicultural Festival held at
Grazeland



1,275

films submitted to the
Multicultural Film Festival



24

Regional Advisory Council
meetings held for 213 members



3

Multifaith Advisory Group
meetings and
1 special event for 34 members



5

Multicultural Youth Network
forums and workshops for
20 members



17

interdepartmental
committees contributed to



8

submissions or input
into reviews



600+

community events attended
by 12 Commissioners



1st

in-language landing pages for the
VMC's flagship events (improving
accessibility for diverse communities)



18

recommendations made in
the Regional Advisory Forum
advocacy report

Understanding the VMC's impact

In 2024–25, as local and global challenges highlighted the critical need for understanding, inclusion and resilience, the VMC strengthened its standing as the trusted voice on behalf of multicultural and multifaith communities. The VMC was a vital bridge for collaboration between people, communities and government.

Our strategic focus for the year was on enhancing our:

1 relationships with government departments and communities

2 internal governance and strategy

3 creativity and innovation in business-as-usual activities.

This strategic emphasis yielded significant impacts, including:

1 enhanced credibility, collaboration and trust with government departments and leadership

2 increased reach into, and trust with, multifaith and multicultural communities

3 high quality and impactful work across all teams through a re-energised and agile approach to our work.

These impacts were demonstrated through the VMC and Commissioners':

- ▶ **agility in responding to** overseas events or conflicts with compassion, often playing a critical convening role by listening to affected communities and reinforcing the importance of neutrality, safety and social cohesion in public discourse
- ▶ **recognition as a trusted public entity** that can advocate for cultural inclusion, safety and belonging, while closing feedback loops to promote visibility over the VMC's advocacy efforts
- ▶ **increased outreach and work** with the Victorian Government to make sure the voice, experience and cultural nuances of diverse communities are reflected in proposed legislation and policies, enhancing their effectiveness
- ▶ **enriched bespoke engagement activities**, including an online forum with the Premier of Victoria and Minister for Multicultural Affairs on bail reform and anti-vilification laws
- ▶ **repeated requests to disseminate** crucial information and facilitate community consultation on vital issues
- ▶ **increased federal engagement**, including multiple consultations with Special Envoys, federal Ministers and the Department of Home Affairs
- ▶ **input into several Victoria Police reviews**, and regular high-level meetings with Victoria Police officials
- ▶ **increased invitations** to, and attendance at, community events
- ▶ **stronger governance foundations**, enabling more effective advocacy and seamless onboarding for new Commissioners and members
- ▶ **successful delivery** of a full calendar of uplifting, collaborative and celebratory events throughout the year, reflecting our renewed operational strength, including an inaugural television campaign for Cultural Diversity Week and the return of the Victorian Multicultural Festival.

Testimonials about the VMC

The true measure of the VMC's impact lies in the voices of the diverse communities we serve. Here's what some of our valued members and partners shared about their experiences with the VMC this year:

Regional Advisory Council members

Testimonial by Harisankar Parippaayillam



“Being part of the RAC for the Grampians region over the last few years has been an enriching experience. It has provided a platform for the Ballarat Indian and Hindu communities to express their perspectives and

needs, while also enabling us to relay the Victorian Multicultural Commission's messages to the regional population.

This two-way communication has ensured mutual understanding and growth. Additionally, participating in numerous events and meetings with the advisory committee has broadened my understanding of other communities and their leadership.”

Testimonial by Nicolas Ojeda Amador



“As a passionate member of the North West Metro RAC, I have witnessed the powerful role the VMC plays in creating spaces where multicultural communities are not only represented but truly heard. Over the past few

years, our RAC has worked collaboratively to unearth community voices, identify local issues, and advocate for systemic change.

My work at Beyond Blue, and mentoring young people through CMY's Employment Empowers program, has reinforced how vital these platforms are for real change. I'm especially proud to represent the vibrant Latin American community—whose growing contributions are essential to Victoria's multicultural future.”

Testimonial by Mariola Nebiu



“Being a part of the Hume RAC has been a great experience, allowing me to engage in meaningful discussions and initiatives that support and empower multicultural communities in Victoria.

Collaborating with fellow members has been both inspiring and impactful, and I am grateful for the chance to contribute to positive change in our diverse society.”

Testimonial by Santi Whiteside



“I have been a member of the VMC Eastern Metropolitan RAC since 2021, representing the Indonesian community. It has been a rewarding experience, allowing me to engage with Victoria's multicultural

communities and contribute insights on issues affecting them.

The RAC provides a vital platform that connects communities with government. Through regular consultations, the VMC engages with multicultural and multifaith groups to better understand their challenges and opportunities, ensuring that diverse voices help shape inclusive policies and programs.”

Multicultural Youth Network

Testimony by Aristidis Tsoulakos



“Being part of the MYN has given me the confidence to engage with my community and advocate for diverse young voices.”

Testimony by Ahelee Rahman



“Being a member of the MYN has been a valuable opportunity to connect with young people from diverse backgrounds and advocate directly to the VMC and government around the issues

we are most passionate about. Thank you to the VMC staff for supporting us and bringing together 15 diverse individuals to make an incredible team!”

Multifaith Advisory Group

Testimony by Sheikh Muhammad Nawas Saleem (Board of Imams Victoria)



“The MAG has been a forum for multifaith leaders to share their thoughts on pressing issues affecting the community. As a member of MAG, I felt that I was able to share my viewpoints in a safe

and non-judgemental forum.”

Testimony by Rabbi Daniel Rabin (Rabbinical Council of Victoria)



“In a time when social cohesion is under real strain, I believe the MAG has a greater responsibility than ever to foster genuine, courageous conversations. It's a space with real potential, if we're willing

to lean into the discomfort that true dialogue sometimes demands.”

Testimony by Rev Helen Summers OAM (The Interfaith Centre of Melbourne)



“The MAG's Peace Forum in February was timely as we reflected on cultivating inner peace and compassion, much needed during this uncertain time in the world. Along with some MAG members, I visited

and supported Hindu, Jewish and Islamic leaders and their communities after some serious incidents. Acknowledging our shared humanity and cultivating respectful relationships is one of the great strengths of the MAG. We support each leader and their faith community when issues arise and provide advice to Government, thus contributing towards harmony and social cohesion.”

Attendees of VMC's flagship events

VMC End of Year Event

“Congratulations to the team, great work. It was a beautiful celebration.”

“Congratulations to Vivienne and the VMC team for their tireless efforts.”

Victorian Multicultural Awards for Excellence

“I was very impressed and extremely grateful for the event.”

Victorian Multicultural Festival

“It was an amazing initiative which I think raised awareness around the variety of cultures that coexist in Victoria, which was brought together over something that everyone loves, food!”

Commissioner attendance at community events

“Your attendance and support brought great significance to the event and affirmed the vital role the Victorian Multicultural Commission plays in advancing equity, inclusion and culturally responsive approaches to community wellbeing. Your leadership continues to inspire confidence and direction across our multicultural networks.”

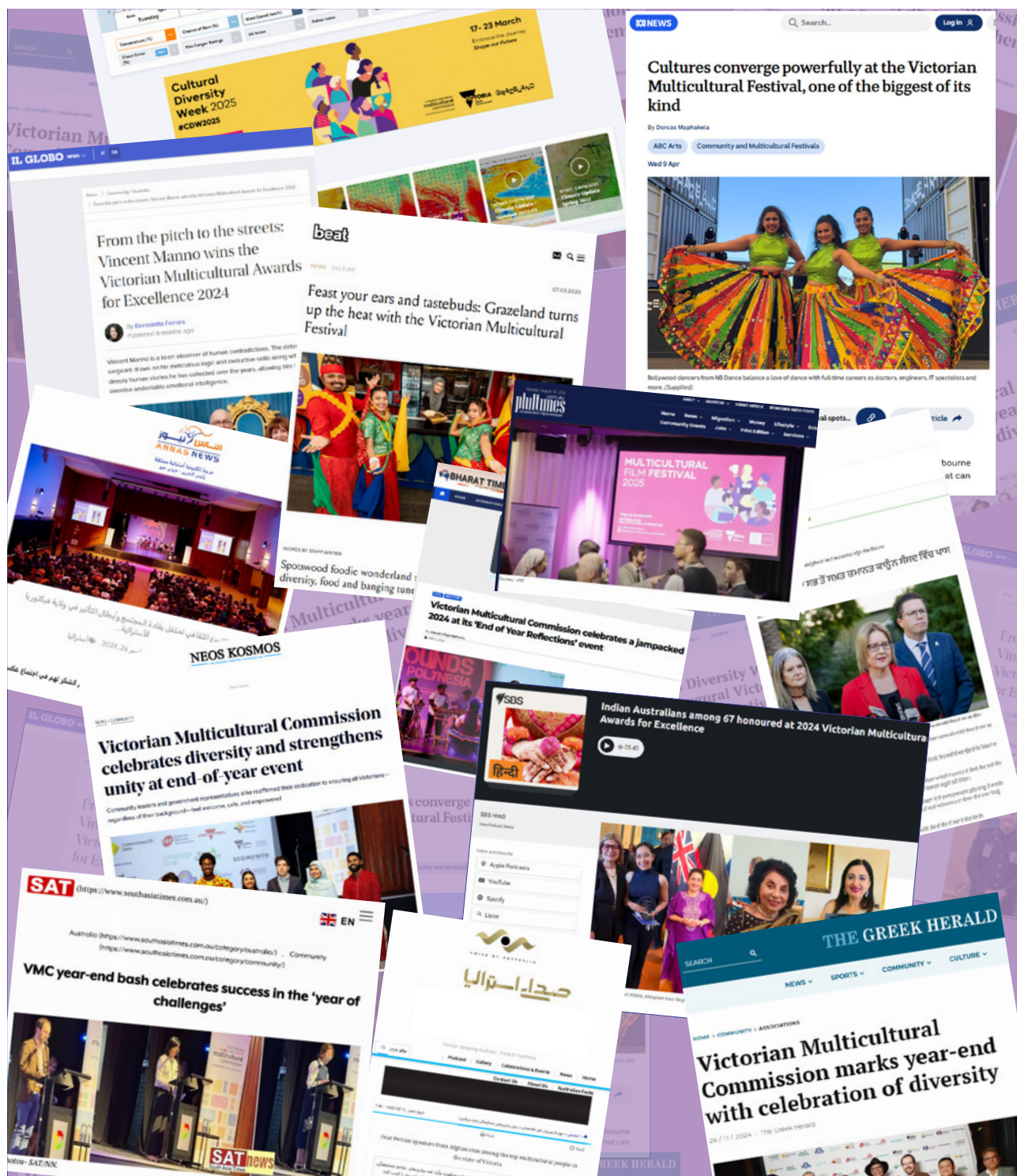
Thank you to our media partners and sponsors

The VMC extends our sincere thanks to all the media outlets and journalists who covered our events throughout the year. Your dedication to sharing stories that celebrate Victoria's cultural diversity has played a vital role in amplifying community voices and bringing people together.

We value your ongoing support and commitment to showcasing the richness of our multicultural communities, and we look forward to continuing this partnership in the year ahead.

The VMC also extends its deep gratitude to our valued sponsors and partners. Their generous contributions and belief in the VMC enhance our impact and engagement across all aspects of our work.

Snapshot of VMC media coverage 2024-25





Snapshot of Victoria's cultural diversity

Victoria's multicultural landscape is a vibrant tapestry, continually enriched by communities from every corner of the globe. This incredible diversity is a cornerstone of our state's identity and strength.

The 2021 Census showed that Victoria's population grew to 6.5 million, an increase from 5.9 million in 2016. It also showed that more than 52% of Victorians were either born overseas or have at least one parent who was born overseas.



30%

of Victoria's population were born overseas; having increased from 28.4% in 2016. Among Victorians, the primary countries of birth are:

Australia 65%

India 4%

England 2.7%

China 2.6%

New Zealand 1.5%

32.8%

spoke a language other than English at home, having increased from 32.1% in 2016. Victoria's linguistic landscape includes:



Mandarin 3.4%

Vietnamese 1.8%

Greek 1.6%

Punjabi 1.6%

130+

different faiths are followed by 60.7% of the population. Victoria also comprises a diverse array of religions and faith groups, with:



40.9% Christian

4.2% Islam

3.3% Hinduism

This compares with 39.3% of Victorians who identify with no religion.

About the Commissioners

The VMC is led by 12 Commissioners. The Commissioners represent the VMC's values and work closely with communities. The Commissioners are committed Victorians, who actively participate in community activities. They understand the challenges facing multifaith and multicultural communities.

Commissioners engage with community groups and faith groups at a grassroots level. They seek to understand the issues facing multicultural communities and to foster collaboration and unity.

Commissioners attend, speak at and support community-led events and initiatives.

They work together to elevate multicultural voices and advocate on behalf of communities, across government.

Commissioners also support, advocate for and represent community perspectives in committees and forums at local, state and national levels. They meet regularly to plan strategies and address community issues.

Commissioners are appointed for a four-year term. The Community Representative Commissioner and Youth Commissioner are exceptions; they are each appointed for two years.

Current Commissioners

Vivienne (Viv) Nguyen AM, Chairperson

Current term: August 2023 to August 2026

First appointed: 24 August 2019



Viv has an extensive track record as a business executive and a community leader in the corporate, community and government settings. She has held roles at AMP Asset Management and ANZ Banking Group, where

she was the Head of Risk for the ANZ Margin Lending portfolio and their diversity strategy.

Viv became a member of the Order of Australia for significant service to Victoria's multicultural communities. She played a critical role in the Victorian Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Viv Co-Chairs the Family Violence

Multicultural Working Group and is a member of the Victoria Police Chief Commissioner Human Rights Strategic Advisory Committee, among many other interdepartmental committees and ministerial advisory taskforces and councils.

Along with her corporate career, Viv is a tireless advocate for grassroots participation and representation, in civic engagement and participation.

She is a recipient of the Centenary Medal, Victorian Women's Honour Roll and a member of the Chief Executive Women.

Bwe Thay, Deputy Chairperson

Current term: September 2021 to September 2025

First appointed: September 2019



Bwe is a spirited advocate for a multicultural Australia. He works to develop the capacity of multicultural communities, with a focus on leadership development, education and employment

outcomes. His involvement extends from working with individual communities to advocacy at the highest levels. His work informs the direction and policy of service providers, businesses and all levels of government.

Bwe has held numerous leadership roles within Victoria's multicultural sector. His work has earned widespread recognition for advancing advocacy, promoting community service and achieving professional excellence.

Known for his practical, hands-on approach, Bwe is deeply committed to fostering unity and engagement among communities. His tireless efforts to promote harmony and build vibrant, inclusive societies continues to resonate across multicultural landscapes.

Gabrielle Marchetti, Community Representative Commissioner

Current term: September 2023 to September 2025

First appointed: September 2023



Gabrielle is a dedicated advocate for multiculturalism and the rights of diverse communities in Victoria. She was born in Italy and migrated to Australia with her family. Her passion for social justice,

particularly regarding workers' rights, led her to pursue a career as a community lawyer in a not-for-profit community legal centre.

In this role, she supported and protected the employment rights of vulnerable workers, especially those most disadvantaged, including temporary visa holders and other migrant workers.

Gabrielle currently serves on the board of the Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria. She is the Vice President of the Committee of Italians Abroad in Victoria and Tasmania (COMITES Victoria and Tasmania) and an Honorary Fellow of the Melbourne Law School.

Gabrielle was a board member of the Multicultural Centre for Women's Health for four years. She was involved in a grassroots campaign to establish Melbourne's first Italian bilingual primary school.

As a Commissioner, Gabrielle welcomes the opportunity to champion the rights and needs of multicultural and multifaith communities across the state: to promoting the full participation of these communities in social, cultural, economic and political life; and advocating for equal access to Victorian services.

Krushnadevsinh Ravalji, Youth Commissioner

Current term: September 2023 to September 2025

First appointed: September 2023



Krushnadevsinh (Kano) Ravalji is the founder of Third Culture Australia and respected advocate for diversity, equity and inclusion. Kano works at the intersection of youth empowerment and systemic

change, amplifying multicultural young voices across schools, policy spaces, and the media.

Through Third Culture, he has designed award-winning school programs, led advocacy initiatives, and recently hosted Australia's first entirely youth-led multicultural conference, welcoming over 120 professionals to reimagine and challenge youth engagement.

His work has been recognised with honours including the VicHealth Future Changemaker Award and Wyndham City's Young Citizen of the Year. A regular contributor to national radio and television, Kano shares insights on international relations, identity, inclusion, and how to meaningfully engage young people in political decision-making.

As Youth Commissioner, Kanos aims to build a more inclusive future where young people, especially those from diverse backgrounds, are seen, heard, and equipped to lead.

Bill Papastergiadis OAM

Current term: September 2021 to September 2025

First appointed: September 2021



Bill is a highly accomplished Australian construction lawyer. He serves as the Managing Partner for the Melbourne office of the pre-eminent national law firm, Moray & Agnew, and is the firm's National Chairman.

Bill has a long history of involvement in multicultural affairs, gained through his role as Director of the Hellenic Initiative and his elected position as President of the Greek Community of Melbourne and Victoria, which he has held since 2008. In this role, Bill has devoted himself to the promotion and welfare of Victoria's Greek community.

Bill is passionate about community work. He is involved in many multicultural programs, including roles such as Chairman of South Melbourne Football Club, former Chair and longstanding board member of Alphington Grammar School, and board member of Melbourne University's Humanities Foundation.

In 2019, Bill was awarded the Order of Australia Medal for service to the Greek Community.

Jennifer Huppert OAM

Current term: September 2021 to September 2025

First appointed: September 2021



Jennifer is a lawyer with more than 30 years' experience, practising largely in government and commercial property law. She is currently a special counsel at Maddocks Lawyers.

Jennifer has a long history of public service in Victoria. Jennifer was a member of the board of the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission from 2016 until 2021; a member of the Legislative Council of the Parliament of Victoria, representing the Southern Metropolitan Region

during 2009 and 2010; and, prior to that, was a director of the Emergency Services State Superannuation Fund.

Jennifer is the immediate past President of the Jewish Community Council of Victoria. She has served on the boards of not-for-profit organisations, including the National Council of Jewish Women of Australia Ltd, the B'nai B'rith Anti-Defamation Commission, the Jewish Taskforce Against Family Violence, and Youth Connect.

Jennifer is currently a councillor of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry. She holds a Bachelor of Laws and Bachelor of Arts from Monash University, and a Master of Urban Planning from the University of Melbourne.

In 2025, Jennifer was awarded the Order of Australia Medal for services to Multicultural Affairs.

Dr Judy Tang

Current term: September 2023 to September 2027

First appointed: September 2019



Judy is a strong advocate for multiculturalism, mental health and LGBTIQ+ communities. She has expertise in psychology, ageing, research and disability.

With extensive relationships across government and community, Judy has volunteered for more than 15 years to promote and advocate for multiculturalism and equality for migrants.

Judy is a former VMC Multicultural Champion and past President of the Australian GLBTIQ Multicultural Council, a national body that advocates for the rights of multicultural and multifaith LGBTIQ+ people and communities.

Judy has a doctorate in neuropsychology and is a practising clinical neuropsychologist.

Dr Mohamed Mohideen OAM JP

Current term: September 2021 to September 2025

First appointed: September 2021



Mohamed is a microbiologist by profession with more than 30 years experience in the field. He is a Professional Member of the Australian Society for Microbiology, and he was an academic in Monash University's Department

of Microbiology for over 20 years. From March 2021 to June 2022, he was Head of Priority Communities and Engagement, COVID-19 Vaccination Response at the Department of Health.

Mohamed is interested in multifaith and multicultural communities and working with community to address mental health, refugee rights and the interaction between multicultural and First Nations communities. He is a strong advocate against family violence and was appointed a White Ribbon Ambassador in 2016.

Mohamed is Deputy Chair of the Faith Communities Council of Victoria, former Chairperson of the Monash Interfaith Gathering, and he is on Monash City Council's Multicultural Advisory Committee. He is President of the Islamic Council of Victoria, and former President of the United Sri Lankan Muslim Association of Australia..

Mohamed was awarded the 2015 Sir John Monash Multicultural Champion and 2018 Sir John Monash Volunteer of the Year by Monash City Council. He received the 2016 Victorian Premier's Volunteer Champion Award for Leadership. In 2013, he was awarded an Order of Australia Medal.

Mohamed is also a current Victorian Justice of the Peace.

Nyangak (Lizzy) Kuoth

Current term: September 2021 to September 2025

First appointed: September 2021



Whimsical, wise and courageous, Lizzy is a young woman who has already lived a full life.

As a child, Lizzy fled war-torn South Sudan with her grandmother and three younger

brothers, spending four years in Egypt before arriving in Melbourne in 2005.

Today, Lizzy is carving out her own niche at the intersection of economics, youth development, diversity and inclusion.

As a Commissioner, Lizzy brings an important voice, cross-cultural wisdom and powerful stories to inspire others. When she isn't at work, Lizzy is either out for a hike or grabbing a coffee with a mate.

Silvia Renda

Current term: September 2021 to September 2025

First appointed: September 2021



Silvia Renda is a passionate advocate for multiculturalism and a community leader with over 25 years of experience bringing people together through meaningful engagement.

Drawing on both her professional expertise and lived experience as a migrant, she has championed initiatives that foster inclusion, economic

participation, and cross-cultural understanding, with a strong commitment to empowering women, migrant-led businesses, and culturally diverse communities.

Silvia founded the Portuguese Speaking Communities of Victoria, serving as President for seven years, and in 2018 established the Portuguese Australian Women's Association, which she continues to chair—building networks of support for Portuguese-speaking women and advocating for women's leadership. She is also a member of the Portuguese Diaspora Council, a global body that mobilises Portuguese professionals abroad to create initiatives in the areas of science, arts, economy, culture and citizenship.

In her role as Chief Advisor and Head of Government Relations at the Australian Financial Complaints Authority, and as a conflict resolution professional, Silvia brings strategic vision and deep policy knowledge to her work with government, international consulates, boards, and senior executives. She also represents the VMC at the Courts Services Victoria Human Rights Reference Committee.

Sylvia Coombe

Current term: September 2023 to September 2027

First appointed: September 2023



Sylvia Coombe is the President of the Fijian Community Association Victoria Inc. and the Vice President of the United Pasifika Council of Victoria Inc.

With a total of more than 28 years experience in quality management including 13 years in rail safety in the Victorian public rail transportation industry, Sylvia has made significant contributions to ensuring the highest standards of quality and safety for passengers and employees.

In addition to her professional role, Sylvia actively volunteers with and supports various state, federal and local boards and organisations. She serves on peak bodies, advisory bodies, local councils, research bodies and consultation committees for the PALM Scheme in Victoria. This Federal scheme strengthens relationships between Australia and Pacific Island countries.

Sylvia is a current volunteer at her local CFA brigade, and is currently a multicultural safety ambassador with the Migrant Worker Centre. These roles demonstrate her dedication to public safety and quality systems, supporting local communities, and protecting the rights and safety of migrant workers.

When combined, these skills and experience demonstrate Sylvia's commitment to the welfare of

others and her passion for making a positive impact across society.

Tarang Chawla

Current term: September 2021 to September 2025

First appointed: September 2021



Tarang is an Indian-born Australian writer, lawyer, campaigner and activist. He is the co-founder of Not One More Niki, one of Australia's largest campaigns to end violence against women and children,

named in honour of his younger sister Nikita who was murdered in 2015.

Tarang is a sessional academic at the University of Melbourne and Monash University. He sits on the board of Gender and Disaster Australia and is a Trust Member of the Greater Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust. He was previously on the Board of the Australian Republic Movement.

Tarang wrote, produced and hosted the first two seasons of the acclaimed podcast *There's No Place Like Home* and has advised both state and federal governments on family violence reform, men's mental health and gender equality.

Tarang has received multiple honours for his work, including Young Australian of the Year Finalist, Young Community Achiever of the Year, twice listed as one of the Top 25 Most Influential People Working for Social Change and one of Australia's Top 40 Under 40 Most Influential Asian-Australians.

Commissioner meeting attendance

Commissioner	Total
Vivienne Nguyen AM	6
Bwe Thay	6
Gabrielle Marchetti	6
Krushnadevsinh Ravalji	6
Bill Papastergiadis OAM	5
Jennifer Huppert OAM	6
Dr Judy Tang	5
Dr Mohamed Mohideen OAM JP	6
Nyangak (Lizzy) Kuoth	5
Silvia Renda	5
Sylvia Coombe	5
Tarang Chawla	4

Supporting government priorities

The VMC plays a crucial role in supporting key government priorities by ensuring multicultural community perspectives are deeply embedded in policy and service delivery.

We achieve this through active representation on Ministerial advisory committees, interdepartmental committees, working groups and direct liaison with departments on specific policy areas. These critical areas include anti-racism, anti-vilification, family violence, mental health, social cohesion and fostering cultural diversity within the public sector.

The VMC promotes and shares crucial information about government programs and initiatives. We also proactively facilitate community involvement, ensuring diverse voices are heard and meaningfully represented across various government functions.

To effectively support government priorities, the VMC collaborates with government departments and agencies to:

- ▶ share insights and seek input from our networks and consultative bodies, such as Regional Advisory Councils (RACs), the Multifaith Advisory Group (MAG) and the Multicultural Youth Network (MYN), and other VMC networks built over the past 40 years
 - ▶ support inclusion and community understanding of multicultural and multifaith communities in broader public life through events and promotion
 - ▶ provide expert input and advice for departmental or whole-of-government submissions
 - ▶ ensure government prioritises the needs of Victoria's multicultural communities when it designs and delivers services
 - ▶ deliver impactful consultations, events and roundtables led and organised by Commissioners
 - ▶ undertake research, for example the report *A Transcultural Approach to Belonging and Engagement among Migrant Youth* published in October 2024, which sought to understand the shift of service delivery from community-specific to mainstream organisations
 - ▶ inform Commissioners about government programs and initiatives through guest presentations by senior officials, and for Commissioners, in turn, to inform communities.
- ## In 2024–25, the VMC made significant contributions to the Victorian Government's priorities. This included:
- ▶ **Anti-racism:** Supported work to shape the Anti-Racism Strategy, including as a member of the Anti-Racism Taskforce and by contributing to the Combatting Islamophobia Guide, and through active community engagement to support Victoria's Truth and Treaty process.
 - ▶ **Anti-vilification:** Provided a submission on the *Draft Justice Legislation Amendment (Anti-vilification and Social Cohesion) Bill* and hosted an online forum with the Premier of Victoria and Minister for Multicultural Affairs on bail reform and anti-vilification laws.
 - ▶ **Family violence:** Co-chaired the Family Safety Victoria Multicultural Working Group and regularly met with key family violence service providers for multicultural communities.
 - ▶ **Mental health:** Advocated to ensure multicultural communities are prioritised in the design and delivery of Victoria's mental health systems and services, including as a member of the Diverse Communities Framework & Blueprint Working Group and through our partnership with the Victorian Collaborative Centre for Mental Health and Wellbeing.

- **Social cohesion:** Released public statements condemning violence, racism and discrimination; supported the Department of Justice and Community Safety (DJCS) in their work, including advice on the machete retail ban; and met with the Special Envoy to Combat Islamophobia in Australia, Special Envoy to Combat Antisemitism in Australia, and Special Envoy for Social Cohesion.
- **Cultural diversity in the public sector:** Provided input into several meetings to develop the Victorian Public Sector Commission's Cultural Diversity Workforce Strategy and provided advice to the Department of Education on board diversity.



Victorian Multicultural Awards for Excellence 2024

Promotion of cultural and religious diversity

The VMC is committed to promoting the benefits of cultural and religious diversity, with a strong focus on building social connection and community cohesion. Through our flagship programs and advocacy, we aim to strengthen multiculturalism, drive anti-racism efforts, and support key government priorities in diversity and inclusion.

In 2024–25, our work in promoting cultural diversity included:

- ▶ **Cultural Diversity Week:** A flagship statewide initiative that highlighted the strength of multiculturalism and engaged communities across Victoria, culminating in the Victorian Multicultural Festival at Grazeland.
- ▶ **Showcasing community contributions:** Inspiring cultural pride and connection through initiatives such as the Victorian Multicultural Gala Dinner, Victorian Multicultural Awards for Excellence, End of Year Event, and the Multicultural Film Festival, which celebrate the remarkable contributions of Victoria's diverse communities.

Victorian Multicultural Gala Dinner 2024: celebrating rich diversity

Held on 24 August 2024 at The Pier Geelong, the Victorian Multicultural Gala Dinner was hosted for the first time in regional Victoria. The event celebrated the vibrancy of our multicultural and multifaith communities, bringing together 500 community leaders, government representatives and multicultural Victorians for an evening of cultural performances, fine dining and networking.

With the theme 'Our Shared Stories: Celebrating Together'—echoing Cultural Diversity Week



Victorian Multicultural Gala Dinner 2024



Victorian Multicultural Awards for Excellence 2024

2024—the Gala showcased Victoria’s rich cultural heritage in a relaxed yet formal setting. Guests were welcomed with live mariachi music and photo opportunities, before enjoying a delicious meal and performances reflecting the diversity of our state.

The Gala provided a memorable platform to honour the strength, pride and unity of Victoria’s multicultural communities.

The VMC thanks the following sponsors for partnering with us to deliver the Victorian Multicultural Gala Dinner 2024: Commonwealth Bank, SBS, Foot Solutions, John Stonemart, LanguageLoop, LouvreElite, My Holistic Care, the Victorian Electoral Commission, Australian Multicultural Foundation and Segmento.

Victorian Multicultural Awards for Excellence 2024: honouring those who foster cross-cultural understanding

Now in its 23rd year, the Victorian Multicultural Awards for Excellence (MAE) formally recognise individuals and organisations who foster cross-cultural understanding and support people from

migrant, refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds to fully participate in Victorian life. The awards are proudly coordinated by the VMC.

In 2024, MAE received 223 submissions (excluding the Police category), with a panel of 27 expert judges selecting award recipients. The awards ceremony was held on 4 December 2024 at Government House, hosted by The Honourable Margaret Gardner AC, and attended by over 400 guests.

Sixty-seven individuals and organisations were recognised across 14 categories for outstanding contributions to multiculturalism, through both professional and volunteer service. For the first time, the Refugee Awards were included, with four winners and four highly commended recipients.

Additionally, 25 Victorians were inducted into the Multicultural Honour Roll, now in its third year, celebrating their enduring commitment to multiculturalism in Victoria.

The VMC thanks the following sponsors for partnering with us to deliver the MAE and Victorian Multicultural Honour Role: Commonwealth Bank, SBS, Foot Solutions, John Stonemart, LanguageLoop, LouvreElite, My Holistic Care and the Victorian Electoral Commission.

2024 End of Year Event: reflecting on the year's achievements

The VMC's 2024 End of Year event, held at Springvale City Hall, brought together over 300 community leaders, partners and sponsors to reflect on the year's achievements and strategic priorities.

The evening celebrated partnerships, milestones, and the contributions of individuals and organisations across Victoria's multicultural communities. Key speakers included Nick Staikos MP, former Parliamentary Secretary for Multicultural Affairs, and VMC Chairperson Vivienne Nguyen AM, who highlighted key accomplishments and future aspirations.

Anthea Hancocks, CEO of the Scanlon Foundation Research Institute, presented insights from the latest Social Cohesion Mapping research. A Welcome to Country and didgeridoo performance by Uncle Shane Charles opened the evening, with vibrant cultural performances by Sounds of Polynesia and Ignite Bollywood Dance Company.

Members from the VMC's advisory forums reflected on 2024 outcomes and set priorities for 2025 in the panel discussion. Commissioners played key roles throughout the evening, with MC duties by Nyangak (Lizzy) Kuoth and moderation by Jennifer Huppert OAM.



End of Year Event 2024



Sponsors Event 2025

Sponsors Event: appreciating our partners

The VMC hosted a Sponsors Event on 27 February to show its appreciation to existing sector and industry partners, who share the VMC's commitment and values in championing and celebrating multiculturalism.

The event included entertainment and a presentation on the VMC's flagship events, highlighting how ongoing partnerships and collaboration are key to fostering social cohesion and strengthening our diverse communities.

Cultural Diversity Week 2025: embracing Victoria's multiculturalism

Held from 17 to 23 March, Cultural Diversity Week (CDW) 2025 was reimagined as a dynamic, standalone flagship initiative, maximising engagement across Victoria. Under the theme 'Embrace the Journey, Shape our Future,' it became the most expansive celebration of multiculturalism in the state's history.

Guided by a three-pillar communications strategy—driving participation, a user-generated campaign, and the Victorian Multicultural Festival—the campaign broadened reach, inspired authentic storytelling, and strengthened community connections.



Cultural Diversity Week Media Launch 2025

Amplifying digital and online connections: Cultural Diversity Week 2025

Digital and social media played a pivotal role in amplifying CDW 2025, driving awareness, engagement and participation across Victoria.

Key digital and social achievements included:

- ▶ A user-generated social media campaign, which encouraged people to share their cultural story in a short video to inspire others and support the theme 'Embrace the Journey, Shape our Future'. Videos showcased different traditions, language, or favourite cultural moments, using the tag @multiculturevic #VMC2025 and #Embracethejourney. The campaign drew over 50,000 interactions, with participation from the Premier, Ministers and high-profile celebrities.
- ▶ Significant web engagement with 19,170 visits to the CDW landing page (59% engagement rate) and 10,686 first-time visitors to the VMC website.
- ▶ Teacher and Stakeholder Kits were digitally distributed to thousands of schools and organisations across Victoria, extending the campaign's reach into classrooms and community settings. This included over 5,000 community organisations, 100 Victorian Government agencies and 79 local councils.

Together, these digital and social activations significantly amplified CDW 2025's message, helping transform it into a far-reaching and participatory celebration of multiculturalism.

CDW key achievements:

- ▶ **Expanded reach and engagement** through stronger partnerships with corporate sponsors, government agencies and community organisations. This supported a record number of regional and local events including performances, food festivals and cultural showcases.
- ▶ **Victorian Multicultural Festival** (21 to 23 March), delivered in partnership with Grazeland, featured 20 performances, 50 food vendors and 7 sponsor activations, attracting 9,687 visitors—a 25% increase in foot traffic compared to the venue's standard weekly visitation.
- ▶ **A pre-festival media launch**, attended by over 60 public figures, secured 19 media mentions across TV, print, radio, and digital—reaching an estimated 700,400 people.
- ▶ **The first-ever CDW television commercial**—made possible through partnerships with Think HQ/CultureVerse and OMD—aired across multiple channels and drove unprecedented visibility and engagement through a statewide integrated media campaign reaching over a million Victorians.
- ▶ **A user-generated social campaign** using the hashtag #CDW2025, which drew over 50,000 interactions.
- ▶ **The CDW campaign** drove 19,170 visits to the CDW landing webpage and distributed Teacher and Stakeholder Kits to thousands of schools and organisations across Victoria.

CDW 2025 achieved its central goal: celebrating Victoria's many cultures, while inviting every community to help shape our shared future. From a record-setting schedule of regional and metropolitan events to the inaugural TV/radio campaign and a user-generated social push that drew thousands of new voices, engagement reached unprecedented levels.

The VMC thanks the following sponsors for partnering with us to deliver Cultural Diversity Week and the Victorian Multicultural Festival: Commonwealth Bank, Grazeland, SBS, Think HQ / CultureVerse, Australian Government Department of Health, Disability and Ageing, Leba CALD Media, S&J Media Group, Foot Solutions, John Stonemart, LanguageLoop, LouvreElite, My Holistic Care and the Victorian Electoral Commission.

Multicultural Film Festival 2025: showcasing diversity through cinema

The VMC proudly presented the Multicultural Film Festival (MFF) in partnership with Swinburne University of Technology. This showcased short films that celebrate cultural diversity globally and explore life in multicultural Australia—home to the world's oldest living cultures and over 300 different ancestries.

In 2025, the festival saw a significant increase in engagement, receiving 1,275 submissions, up 145 from the previous edition. Films explored a broad range of themes, including migration, settlement, and intergenerational and intercultural experiences.

For the first time, the VMC partnered with a network of experienced filmmakers and industry professionals who became Friends of the MFF. These passionate advocates, listed below, demonstrated commitment to championing diverse storytelling and supporting the next generation of emerging talent across Australia's vibrant screen industry:

- ▶ **Atong Atem**
- ▶ **Helen Kapalos**
- ▶ **John Safran**
- ▶ **Josh Piterman**
- ▶ **Ra Chapman**
- ▶ **Tig Terera**

Fifteen films were chosen as the MFF Official Selection. Films received awards and honourable mentions across six categories. The MFF premiered at a public screening at ACMI Cinemas and expanded its reach through additional screenings in metropolitan and regional locations including Bunjil Place, The University of Melbourne Shepparton campus, RMIT University Melbourne campus, Rosebud Cinema in the Mornington Peninsula Shire and Federation Square, as well as through SBS On Demand.

The VMC thanks the following sponsors for partnering with us to deliver the MFF: Commonwealth Bank, Swinburne University of Technology, SBS, Department of Transport and Planning, University of Melbourne, Intersect Global Partners, Segmento, Australian Multicultural Foundation, Foot Solutions, John Stonemart, LanguageLoop, LouvreElite, My Holistic Care, the Victorian Electoral Commission, Bunjil Place, Federation Square, Mornington Peninsula Shire, RMIT University, S&J Media Group and SAE University College.

Background



STIVAL

commission

VICTORIAN
multicultural
commission
strengthening our community

VICTORIA
State
Government

SWINBURNE
UNIVERSITY OF
TECHNOLOGY



Multicultural Film Festival 2025

Advocacy to government

In 2024–25, the VMC reinforced our role as a vital, independent voice for multicultural, multifaith and multilingual communities. Through targeted advocacy, deep consultation and active representation, the VMC ensured that the lived experience of Victoria’s diverse communities informed the development and delivery of policies, programs and services.

Against a backdrop of ongoing global conflict, domestic uncertainty and economic pressures, the VMC advocated for structural reforms that would protect human rights, reduce inequality and foster greater social cohesion for multicultural communities. The VMC’s advisory function continued to be underpinned by direct insight from trusted networks and partners, including our eight RACs, the MAG and the MYN.

This year, the VMC advanced our advocacy and influence through a mix of input into reviews and submissions, collaborative partnerships and participation on interdepartmental committees and taskforces.

Contributions to reviews, submissions and advice: influencing systemic change

In 2024–25, the VMC’s advocacy drew on research and analysis from our community consultations and advisory networks from metropolitan, rural and regional Victoria.

Our efforts focused on:

- ▶ contributing to several major government and independent reviews and reports that aimed to shape fairer and more inclusive policy frameworks for all Victorians
- ▶ preparing detailed submissions in response to government inquiries and policy consultations
- ▶ providing formal advice and promoting community participation on a broad range of issues affecting Victoria’s multicultural communities
- ▶ maintaining respectful and productive relationships with key federal and state Ministers and departmental representatives.

The VMC provided robust advice to reviews and reports examining:

- ▶ social cohesion and anti-racism legislation
- ▶ community safety, including anti-vilification protections and hate crime reporting
- ▶ youth participation and civic education
- ▶ multicultural and migrant settlement outcomes.



Regional Advisory Forum 2025

The VMC's notable contributions to submissions and responses included:

- ▶ Submission to the DJCS's consultation on the *Justice Legislation Amendment (Anti-vilification and Social Cohesion) Bill 2024*, designed to strengthen Victoria's anti-vilification protections.
- ▶ Submission in response to the DJCS's *Reforms to Victoria's Protest Laws—consultation paper*, emphasising multicultural perspectives on the current protest law proposals.
- ▶ Advice to the DJCS on the implications of Victoria's machete ban for multicultural communities.
- ▶ Response to Victoria Police's *Victim-Centric Policing Framework—consultation paper*, to strengthen support for victims of crime and enhance victim-centric policing.
- ▶ Advice to the Department of Home Affairs on programs supporting refugees and humanitarian entrants.
- ▶ Review and contribution to the Victorian Government's *Report on Multicultural Affairs 2023–24*.
- ▶ Input on the Department of Premier and Cabinet's (DPC) draft *Combating Islamophobia Guide*.
- ▶ Presentation by VMC Chairperson Vivienne Nguyen AM at a public hearing for the *Inquiry into capturing data on people who use family violence*.

The VMC also engaged directly with a broad range of Victorian Government departments and the federal Department of Home Affairs, advising on:

- ▶ strengthening Victoria's multicultural policy systems to enhance social cohesion
- ▶ addressing systemic racism, antisemitism and islamophobia
- ▶ improving the collection and use of diversity data
- ▶ designing culturally responsive aged care, family violence and mental health services
- ▶ strengthening rights and protections for temporary visa holders
- ▶ strengthening cultural diversity in the public sector employment, including on boards.

Through this advocacy and advice, the VMC:

- ▶ supported the design of more inclusive policies and practices, while informing broader public service reform
- ▶ elevated multicultural community voices and perspectives in policy development—ensuring that voices often excluded from mainstream policy debates were included, recognised and respected
- ▶ helped highlight barriers, solutions and best practice models for more inclusive government, governance and services.

Using community insights for advocacy: RAC's 2025 Regional Advisory Forum

In June 2025, the VMC held its second Regional Advisory Forum (RAF). The forum brought together RAC members from across Victoria for a full day of collaboration and dialogue with senior Victorian Government representatives.

The RAF focused on key issues raised by communities, including mental health, family violence, racism, employment, housing and youth justice—and created space for RAC members to share local challenges and community-led solutions.

The event strengthened cross-regional connections and reinforced the value of lived experience in shaping public policy. Moderated by VMC Commissioners, the concurrent panel sessions and workshops with department leaders allowed for direct and transparent engagement between community and government.

Insights from the RAF were captured in a strategic VMC advocacy report. This report highlights emerging trends and persistent challenges impacting multicultural Victorians and presents a series of evidence-based recommendations for government. It serves as a key tool for the VMC's ongoing systemic advocacy, ensuring that regional and diverse perspectives continue to inform key statewide strategies, policies and reforms.



Regional Advisory Forum 2025

Responsive advocacy through collaboration and partnerships: effecting change through relationships

Beyond formal submissions and reviews, the VMC actively supported communities through fast-moving events and emerging issues—offering policy guidance, practical advice and direct representation to government when it was most needed.

The VMC’s responsive advocacy efforts focused on strengthening communities, improving services and promoting social cohesion.

This included:

- ▶ promoting accurate, culturally appropriate information during emergency events
- ▶ advocating for better access to government grants, services and resources in languages other than English
- ▶ participating in the roll-out of the Community Pharmacist Statewide Pilot, which aims to improve access to services women need
- ▶ contributing to consultations for VicHealth’s Research Translation Centre, dedicated to anti-racism and health equality.

These efforts were supported through close collaboration with a range of partners at the state level, including:

- ▶ Department of Education
- ▶ Department of Families Fairness and Housing and Family Safety Victoria
- ▶ Department of Health

- ▶ Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions
- ▶ Department of Justice and Community Safety
- ▶ Department of Premier and Cabinet
- ▶ Victoria Police
- ▶ Victorian Collaborative Centre for Mental Health and Wellbeing
- ▶ Victorian Electoral Commission
- ▶ Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission
- ▶ Victorian Public Sector Commission

The VMC also worked closely with partners at the federal level, including:

- ▶ Australian Human Rights Commission and Race Discrimination Commissioner
- ▶ Department of Home Affairs
- ▶ Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commission
- ▶ Minister for Multicultural Affairs and Assistant Minister for Citizenship, Customs and Multicultural Affairs
- ▶ Special Envoy to Combat Islamophobia in Australia, Special Envoy to Combat Antisemitism in Australia, and Special Envoy for Social Cohesion

This cross-sector engagement ensured that advocacy remained agile, community-informed and solutions-oriented.

Participation on committees and taskforces: embedding community insight into government systems

The VMC maintained strategic engagement with government through participation in committees, taskforces and working groups across health, education, justice, family violence, youth justice and human rights. Examples included:

- ▶ Anti-Racism Taskforce, Department of Premier and Cabinet
- ▶ Best Start, Best Life Taskforce Advisory Group, Department of Education
- ▶ CALD Advisory Group, Victorian Electoral Commission
- ▶ CALD Health Advisory Committee; Mental Health Ministerial Advisory Committee; Diverse Communities Framework & Blueprint Working Group; Victorian National Disability Insurance Scheme Community Advisory Council, Department of Health
- ▶ Chief Commissioner's Human Rights Strategic Advisory Committee; Multicultural Portfolio Reference Group, Victoria Police
- ▶ Expert Working Group on Family Violence, Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (co-chaired with Family Safety Victoria)
- ▶ Inter Agency Committee, South Sudanese Australian Youth Justice Expert Working Group, DJCS
- ▶ Multifait/Multicultural Advisory Committee, Coroners Court of Victoria
- ▶ Statewide Community Consultation Group, Environment Protection Authority
- ▶ Victoria Human Rights Reference Committee, Court Services Victoria

Through these forums, the VMC shared valuable community intelligence, provided culturally nuanced policy advice, and facilitated direct connections between government leaders and community representatives. These collaborations were pivotal in shaping inclusive, effective policies and services that authentically reflect Victoria's diverse population.



Regional Advisory Forum 2025

Community engagement

In 2024–25, the VMC deepened our direct engagement with multicultural communities and government—working collaboratively to respond to complex needs, promote inclusive policy and strengthen social cohesion. Through place-based engagement and cross-sector collaboration, the VMC empowered local voices, nurtured emerging leaders and promoted communities’ participation in decision-making processes.

Regional Advisory Councils: local voices, statewide influence

The VMC’s eight RACs, comprising over 210 members, continued to be a cornerstone of the VMC’s community engagement framework. RACs offer a platform for grassroots leaders to share local insights and advocate on issues affecting migrant and refugee communities across Victoria’s metropolitan, regional and rural areas.

Each RAC meeting—chaired by a VMC Commissioner—provided space for open dialogue on matters such as mental health, employment, racism, family violence and housing.

RAC highlights in 2024–25 included:

- ▶ Convening 24 formal meetings and targeted consultations.
- ▶ Identifying speakers and priority themes for the 2025 RAF, including sub-themes within the top priority areas and youth justice.

The VMC is deeply grateful to partner organisations that hosted RAC meetings in 2024–25, including AMES Australia (Noble Park and Multicultural Hub), Breakthrough Education, Cultura and City of Ballarat.



Regional Advisory Council (Grampians) 2024–25



Peace Building through Contemplation, Compassion, and our Common Humanity Forum 2025

Multifaith Advisory Group: a collective voice for peace and inclusion

The MAG continued to serve as a vital platform for fostering dialogue between the Victorian Government and faith communities across the state. The MAG brings together faith leaders from across Victoria to provide advice on issues affecting their communities and to promote respectful interfaith collaboration.

In 2024–25, the MAG played a pivotal role in supporting social cohesion amid global tensions and local communities' anxieties and concerns. The MAG deepened its role as an advisory body, offering strategic insights on issues affecting religious diversity, social cohesion and community harmony.

Comprising approximately 30 senior representatives from Victoria's major faith traditions—including Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Sikh, Hindu, Buddhist and Baha'i communities—the MAG provided a space for spiritual leaders to share perspectives, elevate peace messaging and advocate for religious equity.

MAG highlights in 2024–25 included:

- ▶ Three formal meetings, including to provide input into the federal Department of Home Affairs' whole-of-society Social Cohesion Engagement Framework.
- ▶ *The Peace Building through Contemplation, Compassion, and our Common Humanity* forum in April 2025.
- ▶ Input into the Victorian Multicultural Review led by George Lekakis AO.

The MAG's leadership continues to be a source of strength and stability, particularly during times of community tensions and public uncertainty.

Promoting harmony with multifaith communities in challenging times: MAG's Peace Building forum

In April 2025, the MAG, in collaboration with the Monash Centre for Consciousness and Contemplative Studies, the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture, and Calm in the City, co-convened *Peace Building through Contemplation, Compassion, and our Common Humanity* at Queen's Hall, Parliament of Victoria. This landmark forum brought together more than 100 community and faith leaders across Victoria to reflect deeply on the role of inner peace, mindfulness and shared human values in fostering social cohesion and community harmony.

The forum was opened by Her Excellency Professor the Honourable Margaret Gardner AC, Governor of Victoria, who underscored the importance of embracing diversity within the framework of a respectful and inclusive democracy. Iwan Walters, Parliamentary Secretary for Multicultural Affairs, reflected on how practices like contemplation help communities face challenges together.

Keynote presentations by Professor Craig Hassed, Sister Jayanti Kirpalani and Bishop Philip Huggins explored how contemplative practices such as meditation and reflection cultivate empathy, clarity and resilience—tools essential for navigating both personal and collective challenges. These reflections were supported by music, silence and dialogue, creating space for participants to set personal intentions toward peacebuilding in their own communities. MAG Chairperson and VMC Commissioner Vivienne Nguyen AM emphasised the forum as an expression of MAG's core purpose: to model respectful, honest and constructive interfaith dialogue, while advising government and supporting the wellbeing of Victoria's diverse faith communities.

Multicultural Youth Network: empowering young changemakers

The MYN continued to provide a vital platform to elevate the voices of young Victorians from diverse cultural and faith backgrounds throughout 2024–25. As a key advisory body to the VMC, the MYN provides insights on a range of youth-focused issues, ranging from education and mental health to inclusion, racism and employment equity.

Representing a cross-section of Victoria's multicultural youth, MYN members—aged between 16 and 25 years—met formally four times to shape conversations and actions that influence Victorian Government policy, amplifying youth perspectives to government departments and agencies.

MYN highlights in 2024–25 included:

- ▶ The preparation, moderation and delivery of a concurrent session on youth justice at VMC's RAF. In panel sessions and workshops, MYN members contributed their lived experiences and insights to discussions on early intervention, diversion and culturally safe justice responses. They also explored how mental health, identity and social connection can shape positive pathways away from the justice system.
- ▶ A young leaders and capacity-building workshop led by Dr Teresa De Fazio OAM brought together MYN members and diverse young leaders from other organisations, including the Centre for Multicultural Youth, Future Women and YMCA Youth Parliament. The workshop participants explored areas such as leadership, resilience and creative problem-solving in multicultural contexts and committed to applying their learnings in future MYN initiatives.



Peace Building through Contemplation, Compassion, and our Common Humanity Forum 2025

Partnerships and working together: strengthening partnerships for collaborative impact

In 2024–25, the VMC strengthened our impact through key partnerships with government agencies and community organisations, delivering targeted programs and fostering social cohesion across Victoria.

Notable collaborations included:

- ▶ Hosting an online forum in April 2025 with the Premier of Victoria, The Hon. Jacinta Allan MP, and Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Ingrid Stitt. The forum was attended by more 300 people and provided a valuable opportunity for participants to engage directly with government on issues such as bail reform, anti-vilification laws and the Victorian Multicultural Review.
- ▶ Partnering with DPC to deliver two Treaty Information sessions in Springvale and St Albans, each attended by around 50 participants.
- ▶ Collaborating with DPC Multicultural Affairs to engage international delegations from Myanmar and Japan, raising awareness of the VMC's pivotal role in supporting multiculturalism and strengthening social cohesion in Victoria.
- ▶ Collaborating with the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission to present at VMC's eight RAC meetings on addressing workplace discrimination and combatting racism.
- ▶ Working with the Victorian Electoral Commission to raise awareness and provide information to communities about the local council election in October 2024.
- ▶ Supporting Tenants Victoria for their Multicultural Rental Rights Forum which promoted and provided information and resources to multicultural communities.
- ▶ Co-hosting the Connecting Entrepreneurial Women Business Leaders Forum with the Hellenic Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Australian Asian Business Women's Association and National Council of Jewish Women Australia Victoria. This event recognised the role of diverse women in leadership and business, and the contribution of multicultural businesses to safeguarding community harmony and social cohesion.

- ▶ Engaging with the Centre for Multicultural Youth to empower multicultural youth, particularly new and emerging communities, and the issues that impact them.
- ▶ Partnering with AMES Australia and the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions to deliver the Multicultural Learning Partnership, to improve engagement of multicultural learners in core skills training and strengthen their pathways to employment.

These above partnerships reflect the VMC's commitment to collaborative, community-driven approaches that amplify multicultural voices and create meaningful opportunities for social and economic inclusion across Victoria.

The VMC worked closely with different stakeholders as part of our community engagement, ongoing collaboration and advocacy efforts, including:

- ▶ the Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria, through its networks of regional ethnic communities' councils and Multicultural Mental Health Network
- ▶ Monash Health as a member of its Regional Expert Advisory Group, Murdoch Children's Research Institute as a member of its GenV National Strategic Partnerships Advisory Committee, and Moonee Valley City Council as a member of its Multilingual reference group
- ▶ Scanlon Foundation Research Institute on matters of social cohesion
- ▶ by supporting multicultural communities in responding to the local impact of global events and conflicts, such as those in Gaza, Myanmar, Ukraine, Afghanistan, South Sudan, Iran, India and Pakistan.

VMC Commissioners also attended over 600 events organised by the community throughout the year. The VMC received positive feedback that Commissioners' attendance and support brings great significance to events and affirms the vital role the VMC plays in advancing equity, inclusion and culturally responsive approaches to community wellbeing. Commissioners' leadership continues to inspire confidence and direction across our multicultural networks.



Peace Building through Contemplation, Compassion, and our Common Humanity Forum 2025

Our Sponsors

The Victorian Multicultural Commission (VMC) values its relationships with our sponsors and partners, recognising that their support is fundamental to our strength and impact.

We are proud of our ability to build deep and enduring partnerships through high-value sponsorship packages. The VMC welcomes partners who share our commitment and values in championing and celebrating multicultural Victoria. Our partners create value for the VMC and multicultural communities, within a framework that shares and strengthens trusted relationships.

The VMC helps our partner organisations to:

- ▶ express their commitment to a multicultural and harmonious society
- ▶ build brand awareness and enhance public profile within diverse communities
- ▶ develop meaningful networks and client relationships across multicultural sectors
- ▶ deepen knowledge and understanding of multicultural communities and their unique needs
- ▶ support and align with impactful promotional campaigns that reach broad audiences
- ▶ send a strong, visible message of support and commitment to multicultural communities.

The VMC extends its sincere thanks to our 2024–25 sponsors and partners for their invaluable contributions:

Major partner

- ▶ Commonwealth Bank

Media partner

- ▶ SBS

Delivery partners

- ▶ Grazeland
- ▶ Swinburne University of Technology

Supporting partners

- ▶ Foot Solutions
- ▶ LanguageLoop
- ▶ LouvreElite
- ▶ My Holistic Care
- ▶ Stonemart
- ▶ Victorian Electoral Commission

Event partners

- ▶ Australian Multicultural Foundation
- ▶ Department of Transport and Planning
- ▶ Intersect Global Partners
- ▶ Segmento
- ▶ The University of Melbourne

Program partner

- ▶ Think HQ/CultureVerse

Promotion partners

- ▶ Australian Department of Health, Disability and Ageing
- ▶ Bunjil Place
- ▶ Federation Square
- ▶ LEBA Network
- ▶ Mornington Peninsula Shire
- ▶ RMIT University
- ▶ S&J Media Group
- ▶ SAE University College

Major partner



Media partner



Delivery partners



Supporting partners



Event partners



Program partner



Promotion partners





Peace Building through
Contemplation, Compassion, and
our Common Humanity Forum 2025

Appendix 1

Regional Advisory Council members 2024–25

Barwon South West Region

Chair

- ▶ Commissioner Dr Judy Tang

Members

- ▶ Carly Ann Jordan
- ▶ Catherine Jonathan
- ▶ Cecilia Lynn Vence
- ▶ Dhiraj Neupane
- ▶ Faiza Kakay Zai Asif
- ▶ Fiona Greig
- ▶ Gyanendra Upreti
- ▶ Josy Kadavil Thomas
- ▶ Maria Angelica Doldan
- ▶ Matin Ghayour Minaie
- ▶ Navin Nayak
- ▶ Niraj Karanjeet
- ▶ Sameera Aduru
- ▶ Syed Abidi
- ▶ Wei-Lin Mai
- ▶ Yai Marach Yai

Grampians Region

Chair

- ▶ Commissioner Silvia Renda

Members

- ▶ Betty Mathew
- ▶ Cephas Lem Baguot
- ▶ Harisankar Parippaayillam
- ▶ Hee Young Lim
- ▶ Irumva Apollinaire
- ▶ John Millington
- ▶ Laiba Maqbool
- ▶ Lateef Olufunlayo Adeleye
- ▶ Meeta Narsi
- ▶ Patricia Alves de Araujo
- ▶ Petrina Nani
- ▶ Sachin Dahiya
- ▶ Wendy Bywaters
- ▶ Katrina Cabalquinto Baraquiel (*Appointed 13 March 2025*)

Loddon Mallee Region

Chair

- ▶ Commissioner Nyangak (Lizzy) Kuoth

Members

- ▶ Abhishek Awasthi
- ▶ Ajaykumar Shambhunath Mishra
- ▶ Akesa Kei
- ▶ Apolosi Ranawai Lasei
- ▶ Ernest Antoine
- ▶ Garima Solanki
- ▶ Linto George Thomas
- ▶ Manorama Shah
- ▶ Rosita Vincent
- ▶ Shanakra Gangadhar Hgadi
- ▶ Shingirai Nyabonda
- ▶ Sudheeb Sahadevan
- ▶ Tracey Maree Moss

Hume Region

Chair

- ▶ Commissioner Sylvia Coombe

Members

- ▶ Adnan Ahmad
- ▶ Ali Reza Alizadah
- ▶ Bhakti Mainali Dhamala
- ▶ Bishal Jung Kunwar
- ▶ Emily Lauren Bond
- ▶ Fauzia Islam
- ▶ Leigh Johnson
- ▶ Lorna Gillespie
- ▶ Mariola Nebiu
- ▶ Meena Malla
- ▶ Naynika Bagrecha
- ▶ Neha Samar
- ▶ Nudrat Ara Israr
- ▶ Richard Ogesare Ogetii
- ▶ Sabine Smyth
- ▶ Sam Atukorala
- ▶ Sanobar Allaqaaband
- ▶ Seema Abdullah
- ▶ Varun Joshi

Gippsland Region

Chair

- ▶ Commissioner Dr Mohamed Mohideen OAM JP

Members

- ▶ Arfa Sarfaraz Khan
- ▶ Christine Leng Huat Lee
- ▶ Derya Deniz Demirel
- ▶ Julia Rovey de Souza
- ▶ Oluremi Yusuf
- ▶ Sally Margaret Gafa
- ▶ Syed Hasan Tanveer
- ▶ Syeda Amatullah Husaini
- ▶ Wombat David Colin Lyons
- ▶ Yingxue Wang
- ▶ Yumna Ahmed
- ▶ Rebecca Christine Hutchinson (*Resigned 8 November 2024*)

North West Metropolitan Region

Chair

- ▶ Commissioner Tarang Chawla

Members

- ▶ Agape Roxanne Sarthou
- ▶ Amrita Gurung
- ▶ Andi Xu
- ▶ Angelos Terrence Kenos
- ▶ Antoun Issa
- ▶ Aradhna Sharma
- ▶ Ashima Soni
- ▶ Asmita Mahire-Singh
- ▶ Aurora Tang
- ▶ Bharat Palta
- ▶ Boudene Howard Hauraki
- ▶ Brwa Abdulkarim Mohamed
- ▶ Dalal Daniel Sleiman
- ▶ Dalal Samaan
- ▶ Dolly Muriel Cutinho
- ▶ Donny Doughty
- ▶ Emmanuela Amos

- ▶ Essan Dileri
- ▶ Eyayaw Ereta Zage
- ▶ Fabiola Campbell-Fraser
- ▶ Farah Warsame
- ▶ Florence Macusi Dato
- ▶ Gandhi Prasad Bhattarai
- ▶ Gary Lee
- ▶ Gaurav Chanana
- ▶ Geetanjali Gaba
- ▶ Godefa Berhane G'her
- ▶ Hang Thi Thuy Nguyen
- ▶ Hasan Naim
- ▶ Jagdish Chander
- ▶ Jamuna Parajuli
- ▶ Jason Cordi
- ▶ Karna Rana
- ▶ Kul Acharya
- ▶ Loudeen Moetunai
Fualautoalasi-Lam
- ▶ Maria Luisa Tuterá
- ▶ Mazin Kalakvan
- ▶ Meera D'Silva
- ▶ Monica Majak
- ▶ Mukhles Habash
- ▶ Nicolas Ojeda Amador
- ▶ Orlando Gibson
- ▶ Paul Orfanos
- ▶ Pelontle Patience Rabai
- ▶ Poonam Arora
- ▶ Provisia Joy Villalino
- ▶ Rahaf Adel Al Maalouf
- ▶ Rajat Chopra
- ▶ Raju Vemula
- ▶ Ravi Sivaram
- ▶ Rhea Verma
- ▶ Roslina Maharjan
- ▶ Ruchika Rawat
- ▶ Ruhee Meghani
- ▶ Sally Saili Acraman Vuli
- ▶ Shanthi Priya Antony
- ▶ Suzan Makhoul
- ▶ Syed Ali Hyder Hussaini
- ▶ Taulogomai Gray
- ▶ Tehani Nishika Paiva
- ▶ Thao Thi Phuong Tran
- ▶ Thu Thuy Thi Nguyen
- ▶ Tony Fretton
- ▶ Tshering Samdrup
- ▶ Vedran Drakulic
- ▶ Yasseen Musa
- ▶ Yelda Arman
- ▶ Yuen Man (Tiffany) Tang
- ▶ Zoraida Alexandra
Salazar Paez

- ▶ Sabiha Fatima (*Resigned
1 July 2024*)
- ▶ Anasina Gray-Barberio
(*Resigned 11 September 2024*)
- ▶ Robert Peter Gruhn
(*Resigned 28 October 2024*)

Southern Metropolitan Region

Chair

- ▶ Commissioner Jennifer
Huppert OAM

Members

- ▶ Adwin Town
- ▶ Ali Al Lawati
- ▶ Ali Yaghobi
- ▶ Arshjot Kaur Ramana
- ▶ Aruna Hewagama
- ▶ Bismi Mohamed Ismail
- ▶ Cecilia Mphande
- ▶ Chris Mallika Bhadra
- ▶ Claudio Cardamone
- ▶ Devendra Singh
- ▶ Fahim Ahmed Farooq
- ▶ Farhat Sameer Shaikh
- ▶ Gopal Harishchandra
Ganwani
- ▶ Huiting Wei
- ▶ Hy (Andy) Tran
- ▶ Jackie King
- ▶ James Seow
- ▶ Janice Gail Iloni
- ▶ Josephine Khoshaba
- ▶ Karen Vergara
- ▶ Kulendrasingam Sivasuthan
- ▶ Lina Orozco Munera
- ▶ Manir Uz Zaman
- ▶ Mary Ann Xavier
- ▶ Mike Zervos
- ▶ Nasir Ahmad Ahmadi
- ▶ Paul Fulton Saluni
- ▶ Phillip James Start
- ▶ Rahmatullah Hussaini
- ▶ Sai Divya Pasupuleti
- ▶ Samantha-Jane Potter
- ▶ Simon Ho
- ▶ Sivanthi Gurumurothy
- ▶ Sukhvinder Singh Duggal
- ▶ Theresa Sengaaga Ssali
- ▶ Vinh-Quang Luong
- ▶ Yakindra Prasad Timilsena
- ▶ Yan Ma

Eastern Metropolitan Region

Chair

- ▶ Commissioner Bill
Papastergiadis OAM

Members

- ▶ Adnan Hafeez
- ▶ Afrooz Rahimian
- ▶ Amit Rameshchandra Patel
- ▶ Bernadette Anne Khoury
(Chahwan)
- ▶ Christina Teo
- ▶ Chun Weng (Stephen) Yin
- ▶ Deepak Joshi
- ▶ Fairley Anthony Wijesinghe
- ▶ Farhang Parvizián
- ▶ Farkhanda Shaheen Butt
- ▶ Fathima Saarah Ozeer
- ▶ Jian Min Li
- ▶ Jun Dong Anderson
- ▶ Laumanu Puamau
- ▶ Linda Teng
- ▶ Ling Sun
- ▶ Mahera Amber Haque
- ▶ Ming Kiat Danny Ong
- ▶ Mohsen Afkari
- ▶ Namgay Wangchuk
- ▶ Noha Aly
- ▶ Nur Asiyah (Santi) Whiteside
- ▶ Odia Ukoko
- ▶ Parameswaran
Arputhanathan
- ▶ Paramjit Jaswal
- ▶ Philip Hwa Nam Tan
- ▶ Qing Liang
- ▶ Raju Adhikari
- ▶ Rufina Chan
- ▶ Sabaratnam
Sundaramoorthy
- ▶ Saleha Singh
- ▶ Sedi Smith
- ▶ Vijaya Lakshmi Tangirala
- ▶ Wilfred Yang Wang
- ▶ Xiaoyi Wang
- ▶ Ying Hua Gavin Choong
- ▶ Yuqing Feng

Appendix 2

Multifaith Advisory Group members 2024–25

The Multifaith Advisory Group (MAG) was established in 2008 in response to recommendations from the 2007 Premier’s Multifaith Leaders Forum.

The MAG is an advisory body that represents the voices of Victoria’s faith leaders to the Victorian Government, through the Commission.

The aims of the MAG are to:

- ▶ ensure ongoing dialogue between the Victorian Government and Victoria’s faith leaders and communities
- ▶ assist the government to understand and appropriately respond to situations that arise in diverse faith and multicultural communities around Victoria.

The MAG consists of 29 member organisations from Victoria’s diverse faith communities including various Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh, Hindu, Buddhist and Baha’i communities.

Members:

- ▶ All Nations Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia Mulgrave
- ▶ AMAFHH Federation - Shi’a organisation
- ▶ Anglican Diocese of Melbourne
- ▶ Australian Baha’i Community
- ▶ Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture
- ▶ Australian Intercultural Society
- ▶ Australian Muslim Women’s Centre for Human Rights
- ▶ Board of Imams Victoria
- ▶ Buddhist Council of Victoria
- ▶ Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne
- ▶ Catholic Social Services Victoria
- ▶ Coptic Orthodox Diocese of Melbourne
- ▶ Ethnic Communities’ Council of Victoria
- ▶ Faith Communities Council of Victoria
- ▶ Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia - Melbourne District
- ▶ Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia - Northcote District
- ▶ Hindu Council of Australia
- ▶ Islamic Council of Victoria
- ▶ Jewish Community Council of Victoria
- ▶ Jumbunna Episcopate, Anglican Diocese of Melbourne
- ▶ Lutheran Church of Australia, Victorian District
- ▶ Presbyterian Church of Victoria
- ▶ Rabbinical Council of Victoria
- ▶ Russian Orthodox Church outside Russia, Australian and New Zealand Diocese
- ▶ Salvation Army
- ▶ Sikh Interfaith Council of Victoria
- ▶ The Interfaith Centre of Melbourne
- ▶ Uniting Church in Australia, Synod of Victoria and Tasmania
- ▶ Victorian Council of Churches



Peace Building through Contemplation, Compassion, and our Common Humanity Forum 2025

Appendix 3

Multicultural Youth Network members 2024–25

In October 2022, the VMC launched its Multicultural Youth Network (MYN), for the August 2022 to August 2024 term, at Parliament House in Victoria. This term was extended until October 2025.

A total of 20 young people, aged between 16 and 25 years old, were selected to represent each of the eight regions of Victoria:

- ▶ Barwon South West
- ▶ Gippsland
- ▶ Grampians
- ▶ Hume
- ▶ Loddon Mallee
- ▶ Eastern Metropolitan
- ▶ North and West Metropolitan
- ▶ Southern Metropolitan

The MYN is a platform for members to advise the VMC and government departments on matters affecting multicultural young people including multicultural affairs, mental health, employment, racism and discrimination. These voluntary roles present a unique opportunity to directly engage with the VMC, and assist in promoting the benefits of diversity and youth voice.

Members

- ▶ Aakriti Malhotra
- ▶ Ahelee Rahman
- ▶ Albert Mumba
- ▶ Aleeza Hafeez
- ▶ Aristidis Tsoulakos
- ▶ Bradley Imalenowa
- ▶ Celil Kardaslar
- ▶ Dinuki Rajapaksha Pathirannehelage
- ▶ Farzana Alam Eshita
- ▶ Hanienah Husna
- ▶ Khalid Muse
- ▶ Nathaniel Diong
- ▶ Numan Seyit
- ▶ Shirin Gul Amini
- ▶ Varun Joshi
- ▶ Zara Khan



Victorian Multicultural Gala Dinner 2024

Appendix 4

2024 Victorian Multicultural Awards for Excellence Recipients

Arts Award

- ▶ Walker Street Gallery and Arts Centre, City of Greater Dandenong – Winner
- ▶ Albanian Moslem Society Shepparton – Winner
- ▶ L2R Dance – Highly Commended

Business & Employment Award

- ▶ Mohammed Alebrahimi – Winner
- ▶ Multicultural Consulting Services – Winner
- ▶ MiCare Ltd – Highly Commended
- ▶ Niti Bhargava – Highly Commended

Emergency Services Award

- ▶ Fire Rescue Victoria – Multicultural Liaison Officers – Winner

Local Government Award

- ▶ City of Melbourne – International Education Team – Winner
- ▶ City of Greater Dandenong Council Festivals and Events – Highly Commended

Media Award

- ▶ Lakshmi Ganapathy – Winner
- ▶ Voice of West Papua Radio – Winner
- ▶ Steve (Sotiris) Hatzimanolis – Highly Commended

Mental Health & Wellbeing Award

- ▶ Dr Senem Eren – Winner
- ▶ Associate Professor Iraklis Harry Minas – Winner
- ▶ Mental Health and Well-being Foundation – Highly Commended

Premier's Award for Community Harmony Award

- ▶ Wyndham Central College Link Centre Community Hub – Winner

Police Annual Multicultural Award

- ▶ Detective Senior Constable Andrew Turton – 2024 Winner
- ▶ Senior Constable Andrew Moreton – 2024 Winner
- ▶ Senior Sergeant Stylianos (Steve) Spyrou – 2024 Winner
- ▶ Senior Sergeant Alasdair Farrell – 2024 Winner
- ▶ Detective Sergeant Vincent Manno – 2024 Winner
- ▶ Senior Constable Rana Khan – 2023 Winner

Police Community Exemplary Award

- ▶ Weda Mohseni – 2024 Winner
- ▶ Major Events Human Rights Guide Team – 2023 Winner

Police Multicultural Media Award

- ▶ A/Sgt Kevin Dong – Winner

Prevention of Family Violence Award

- ▶ Whittlesea Community Connections – Winner
- ▶ Ajsela Siskovic – Highly Commended
- ▶ AMES Australia – Prevention of Violence Against Women Leadership Program – Highly Commended

Refugee Achievement Award

- ▶ Mohammad Haroon Sayed – Winner
- ▶ Jacqueline Aungminn – Highly Commended

Refugee Business Award

- ▶ Reliable Community Care – Winner
- ▶ Bendigo Community Health Services (Emergency Preparedness program for former refugees) – Highly Commended

Refugee Leadership Award

- ▶ Rasha Khalid Abbas – Winner
- ▶ Hsar Thein Ju – Highly Commended
- ▶ Hazara Shamama Association of Victoria Inc. – Highly Commended

Refugee Young Leader Award

- ▶ Diba Jalal – Winner

Sport Award

- ▶ Frankleen Muken Jeremiah Newah-Jarfoi – Winner
- ▶ Her Run – Winner
- ▶ Teuila Hanalei Reid – Highly Commended

Youth Leadership Award

- ▶ Ali Agha Wali Zada – Winner
- ▶ Avenue Productions Volunteers Team – Highly Commended

2024 Victorian Multicultural Honour Roll inductees

- ▶ Dr Francis Roger Acquah AM
- ▶ Associate Professor Josefine Antoniadis

- ▶ Dilnaz Homi Billimoria
- ▶ Fabiola Campbell
- ▶ Wesa Wai-Sum Chau
- ▶ Maryum Aziz Chaudhry
- ▶ Lyda Dankha
- ▶ Professor Manjula Datta O'Connor
- ▶ Derya Deniz Demirel
- ▶ Sivanthi Gurumurothy
- ▶ Joseph Haweil
- ▶ Aayushi Khillan
- ▶ Gary Yew Foo Lee
- ▶ Dr Morley Akinbode Muse
- ▶ Tony Le Nguyen
- ▶ Professor Nicholas John Papastergiadis
- ▶ Miriam Silva AM
- ▶ Manpreet Kaur Singh
- ▶ Dalal Sleiman
- ▶ Shazia Syed
- ▶ Costa Alex Vasili
- ▶ Cecilia Lynn Nolasco Vence
- ▶ Deeptha Wickramaratna
- ▶ Jijun (Jack) Yang
- ▶ Annisa Li Zhang



Victorian Multicultural Awards for Excellence 2024





Appendix 5

2025 Multicultural Film Festival Award Recipients and Official Selection

Best Victorian Short Fiction Film sponsored by Swinburne University of Technology

Winner

You Are My Tomorrow

- ▶ Directed and written by Lara Köse
- ▶ Produced by William Duan and Molly O'Connor

Honourable Mention

Still

- ▶ Directed and written by Cornelius Marco
- ▶ Produced by Adrian Dias

Official Selection

Gabriel

- ▶ Directed and written by Kevin Duran Du
- ▶ Produced by Molly Sizer

Best Victorian Short Non-Fiction Film

Winner

Outpicker

- ▶ Directed and written by Le Luo
- ▶ Produced by Feifei Liao

Honourable Mention

Dance with Pride

- ▶ Directed and written by Javier Cantano-Gonzalez
- ▶ Produced by Jorge Luis Cruzado

Official Selection

Hosh Bulduk: A Turkish Migration Story

- ▶ Directed, written and produced by Kuranda Seyfi Seyit

People's Choice Award for Best Victorian Short Film sponsored by The University of Melbourne

Winner

Gabriel

- ▶ Directed and written by Kevin Duran Du
- ▶ Produced by Molly Sizer

Best National Short Film sponsored by SBS

Winner

Housekeepers

- ▶ Directed and written by Kaede Miyamura
- ▶ Produced by Anna Warwick and Evangeline Parks

Honourable Mention

The White Limbo

- ▶ Directed by Ali Vazir
- ▶ Written and produced by Ali Vaziri and Paulo Mousicci

Official Selection

Ngadjuri

- ▶ Directed and produced by Quenten Agius and Kim Mavromatis
- ▶ Written by Quenten Agius

Best International Short Film sponsored by Segmento

Winner

Mechanical Resonance

- ▶ Directed, written and produced by Juejun Chen

Honourable Mention

Chuparrosa

- ▶ Directed and written by Felipe de Jesús Godoy Castillo

Official Selection

Companion

- ▶ Directed, written and produced by Alireza Memariani

Chairperson's Refugee Stories Award sponsored by the Victorian Multicultural Commission

Winner

The Way to Freedom

- ▶ Directed and produced by Hussam Saraf and Darryl McConnell
- ▶ Written by Hussam Saraf

Honourable Mention

Echoes of Home

- ▶ Directed, written and produced by Reza Taherabadi

Official Selection

Old Faces

- ▶ Directed and written by Tamir Anshtein
- ▶ Produced by Tamir Anshtein and Zack Licenblat



Multicultural Film Festival 2025

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Annual report 2024–25

The Annual Report 2024–25 details the core work and key achievements of the Victorian Multicultural Commission, over 2024–25, in context with Commission objectives and functions as outlined in the *Multicultural Victoria Act 2011*.

The information provided in this report is accurate as of 30 June 2025.

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