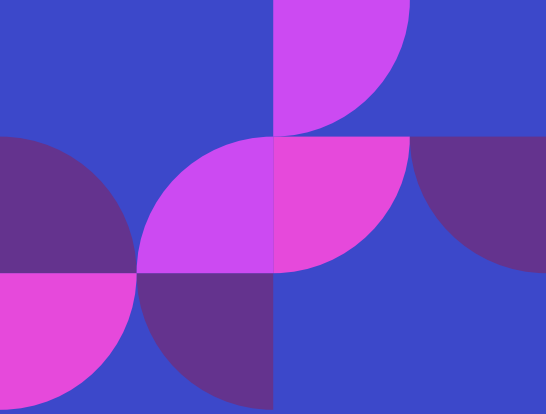


Victorian Multicultural Awards For Excellence 2025



VICTORIAN
multicultural
commission
strengthening our community





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Message from the Governor



It is a great pleasure to welcome you to Government House for the 2025 Victorian Multicultural Awards for Excellence.

Victoria is a place of great diversity and home to a city with one of the largest foreign-born populations of any in the world.

A harmonious multicultural society depends on more than just the presence of people from different backgrounds – it relies on how these diverse communities work with one another to create social cohesion.

Over many years, successive generations of migrants have come to Victoria, bringing new cultures and adding their unique perspectives and voices to the story of our State.

Today's ceremony is a recognition of the people behind such contributions. In celebrating their achievements, we recognise that these efforts enrich all of us.

On behalf of the people of Victoria, congratulations to all nominees and thank you for your invaluable work to make our State a more welcoming and vibrant place.

Professor the Honourable Margaret Gardner AC
Governor of Victoria

Message from the Premier



The Victorian Multicultural Awards for Excellence are an opportunity for Victorians to say thank you to the incredible individuals and organisations who do so much for our state.

Whether it's in the arts or sport, in business or driving social change, every one of you has made a real difference to our community.

To all the Victorian Multicultural Honour Roll inductees, award winners and nominees: congratulations. I want to offer you my heartfelt thanks on behalf of all Victorians.

Victoria is a stronger, fairer and more united place because of you.

You bring us together with a spirit of generosity and inclusion, and we are incredibly proud of your achievements.

Congratulations, and I look forward to seeing what you do next.

Hon Jacinta Allan MP

Member for Bendigo East

Premier of Victoria

Message from the Minister



Now in its 24th year, the Victorian Multicultural Awards for Excellence are a celebration of the many outstanding individuals and organisations whose dedication, innovation and passion make Victoria a richer, more inclusive and vibrant place to live.

I congratulate the 2025 award winners and highly commended nominees and inductees to the Victorian Multicultural Honour Roll.

From arts and business to community leadership, emergency services, and youth initiatives – this year's recipients are champions of our proudly multicultural state, strengthening communities and fostering cross-cultural understanding.

I thank the Victorian Multicultural Commission, led by Chairperson Vivienne Nguyen AM, Commissioners and staff, for its unwavering commitment to ensuring that cultural diversity and harmony is recognised, fostered and celebrated.

These Awards remind us that multiculturalism is not just a principle, but a lived experience that enriches every corner of our state.

Ingrid Stitt MP

Minister for Multicultural Affairs

Message from the Chairperson



I am proud to recognise and celebrate the remarkable achievements of our multicultural champions.

For nearly a quarter of a century, the Victorian Multicultural Awards for Excellence have honoured individuals and organisations who embody the spirit of service, leadership and excellence. Year after year, we are inspired by those who dedicate themselves to making a meaningful difference in their communities.

At a time when our social cohesion and community harmony face new challenges, your commitment, generosity and vision are more important than ever. Because of your efforts, Victoria continues to shine as a place of inclusion, unity and understanding.

On behalf of the Victorian Multicultural Commission, I offer my congratulations to the winners, highly commended recipients, Victorian Multicultural Honour Roll Inductees, and all the nominees.

Thank you to the judges, nominators and referees for dedicating your time and expertise – for helping us recognise, amplify and celebrate the champions of harmony, cohesion and the multicultural fabrics of Victoria.

Vivienne Nguyen AM

Chairperson

Victorian Multicultural Commission



Arts Award

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

Winner



Dr Anindita Banerjee

Dr Anindita Banerjee is a multidisciplinary artist, curator and arts leader whose work empowers multicultural communities through inclusive storytelling, public art and participatory exhibitions. By centering diverse voices and fostering collaboration, Dr Banerjee creates lasting impact across Victoria's civic, cultural and community landscapes.

Highly Commended



Asamina Theatre Company

The Asamina Theatre Company is a Melbourne-based arts organisation dedicated to amplifying multicultural voices through theatre. Its productions and acting academy empower artists from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to explore complex cultural narratives and foster empathy, dialogue and social cohesion across communities through bold, inclusive storytelling.



Business and Employment Award

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

Winner

The logo for VicReturn, featuring the word "VicReturn" in a bold, blue, sans-serif font. The "V" is stylized with a small upward-pointing arrow integrated into its top left corner.

VicReturn

VicReturn, a not-for-profit organisation responsible for coordinating Victoria's Container Deposit Scheme, developed a groundbreaking multicultural engagement strategy. Through partnerships, multilingual campaigns and grassroots outreach, the organisation empowered culturally diverse communities to participate, driving environmental impact, community fundraising and inclusive behaviour change across the state.

Highly Commended

The logo for CAVAL, featuring the word "CAVAL" in a blue, serif font. To the right of the text is a stylized, brown, fan-like graphic with multiple thin lines radiating from a single point, resembling a stylized flower or a fan.

CAVAL Ltd.

CAVAL Ltd. is a leading library services organisation that delivers books in over 50 community languages across Australia and New Zealand. Its multilingual Language Resources team curates and catalogues community language materials from around the world, supporting access, diversity and cultural inclusion. CAVAL Ltd. fosters belonging, celebrates diversity, and strengthens multicultural engagement across Victoria's library sector.



Emergency Services Award

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

Winner



Multicultural Emergency Management Partnership

The Multicultural Emergency Management Partnership (MEMP) brings multicultural leaders and emergency agencies together to strengthen safety and resilience. Through trust-building, co-designed resources and culturally inclusive practices, MEMP ensures diverse communities across Victoria are empowered, prepared and supported before, during and after emergencies.

Highly Commended



Ahmad Jahfar

Ahmad Jahfar is a firefighter with Clyde Fire Brigade and a multilingual community leader. With over eight years of service and more than 800 incident responses, he was awarded the National Emergency Medal and named Australian Muslim Volunteer of the Year in 2025 for his multicultural engagement efforts. Ahmad champions cultural inclusion, delivering multilingual fire safety education and building trust with diverse communities across Melbourne's southeast.



Local Government Award

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

Winner



Greater Shepparton City Council

Greater Shepparton City Council's Emergency Management and Resilience Team partners with multicultural organisations to co-design programs that build community resilience. Their inclusive approach ensures all residents, regardless of background, have the knowledge, skills and confidence to prepare for and recover from emergencies.

Highly Commended



Abbas Sheikh

Abbas Sheikh is a Multicultural Youth Engagement Worker at Wyndham City Council, leading inclusive programs that empower newly arrived and refugee-background youth. Through sport, cultural events and partnerships, Abbas fosters belonging, leadership and civic participation. This creates safe spaces and builds stronger, more connected communities across Wyndham.



Media Award

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

Winner - Organisation



The Philippine Times

The Philippine Times connects Filipino-Australians through trusted reporting and cultural storytelling. By amplifying migrant voices, celebrating Filipino heritage and embracing digital platforms, the online newspaper fosters cross-cultural understanding and empowers communities. This ensures Filipino contributions are recognised as part of Victoria's vibrant multicultural landscape.

Winner - Individual



Dellaram Vreeland

Dellaram Vreeland is a freelance journalist and Australian-born Iranian living on Wadawurrung Country. Based in Ballarat, Dellaram has spent 15 years telling stories across print and digital media, with a focus on multiculturalism, regional affairs, education and mental health. Underpinning Dellaram's coverage is her passion to encourage visibility, inclusivity and change for multicultural communities.



Mental Health and Wellbeing Award

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

Winner



Centre for Muslim Wellbeing

The Centre for Muslim Wellbeing is a community-led organisation improving mental health, spiritual wellbeing, and social inclusion for Muslim communities in Victoria. Grounded in lived experience and guided by evidence, the organisation delivers cultural and faith-informed care through partnerships, advocacy and programs that promote healing, belonging and resilience.

Highly Commended



GenWest

GenWest's Multilingual Health Education program delivers inclusive, in-language health education to migrant and refugee women in Melbourne's west. Led by bicultural educators, the organisation fosters mental wellbeing, cultural safety and community resilience, empowering women to navigate sensitive issues, seek care, and build confidence through trusted, culturally responsive support.



Police Awards

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

Police categories include:

Police Annual Multicultural Award

Recognising police employees who have established relationships with multicultural communities by developing innovative strategies.

Police Community Exemplary Award

Recognising the development of innovative strategies and initiatives that promote positive relations between Police and multicultural communities.

Police Annual Protective Service Officer Multicultural Award

Recognising a Protective Service Officer who has established relationships with multicultural communities by developing innovative strategies.

Police Multicultural Media Award

Recognising police employees who communicate police/multicultural issues via ethnic and/or mainstream media outlets.

Police Annual Multicultural Award

Winner



Leading Senior Constable Leigh Johnson

Joining Victoria Police in 1987, Leading Senior Constable Leigh Johnson is the Multicultural Liaison Officer for the Greater Shepparton area. Of Pacific Islander heritage, Leigh brings a vast understanding of policing and an innate appreciation of multiculturalism and diversity. Working closely with the Ethnic Council of Shepparton and District and the VMC Regional Advisory Council, Leigh's work epitomises community-based policing at its very best.

Police Annual Multicultural Award

Winner



Sergeant Rajesh Sambamurthy

A police officer for eight years, Sergeant Rajesh Sambamurthy has helped Indian community members gain an understanding and better relationship with Victoria Police. Originally from Southern India, Rajesh's language skills in Tamil and Telugu have been advantageous: he has provided safety and security presentations to international students; and worked with SBS to deliver radio broadcasts in Tamil on various safety and security issues.

Police Annual Multicultural Award

Winner



Sergeant Verity Newport

Sergeant Verity Newport serves in the Whitehorse Local Government Area at the Forest Hill Police Station, as the Whitehorse Youth Resource Officer. With her commitment to cultural inclusion, Verity has worked tirelessly in schools, challenging racial bias and social isolation, particularly with newly arrived African and other multicultural students. Many of these schools have reported a very positive impact on student communities as a result of her work.

Police Community Exemplary Award

Winner



Dr Jennie Barrera OAM

Dr Jennie Barrera OAM is CEO of the Wyndham Community and Education Centre (WCEC), which, among other initiatives, provides support to immigrant and refugee communities – including Burmese, Karen, Congolese and South Sudanese communities. Dr Barrera has played a pivotal role in the relationship between WCEC and Victoria Police – especially since 2023, when an escalation in serious crime in the City of Wyndham lead to trauma and heartbreak for many in the community. A stronger relationship with Victoria Police has ensured greater community engagement, trust and support.

Police Community Exemplary Award

Winner



Board of Imams Victoria, Sheikh Moustapha Sarakibi

The Board of Imams Victoria and, in particular, Executive Director Sheikh Moustapha Sarakibi, have played a central role in countering religiously-inspired violent extremism, through the Community Integration Support Program. The success of this program, aimed at individuals in both community and correctional facilities who show signs of radicalism, has provided the model for countering violent extremism in other countries such as the USA, United Kingdom, Canada and New Zealand.

Police Community Exemplary Award

Winner



Dr Harpreet Singh Kandra

A senior lecturer in engineering at Federation University, Dr Harpreet Singh Kandra is also a leader at the Gurdwara Siri Guru Nanak Darbar in Officer, Cardinia. This is an inclusive, accessible and welcoming place of worship that offers free meals and various support programs. Dr Kandra has worked closely with Life Saving Victoria to tackle the high incidents of drowning within multicultural communities – and with the Multicultural Liaison Unit in the Southern Metro Police region to provide educational sessions aimed at a better understanding of the Sikh and wider Indian community.

Police Community Exemplary Award

Winner



Rabbi Shmuel Karnowsky

Rabbi Shmuel Karnowsky, Chief Rabbi at Central Shule Melbourne in Caulfield, has been a dedicated Victoria Police Chaplain for many years. An amiable presence at police station visits, Rabbi Karnowsky works hard to build relationships, attend local policing events, and provide guidance and pastoral support. Through his efforts, Rabbi Karnowsky fosters understanding and intercultural exchange – bridging, especially, the gap between police and Jewish young people.

Protective Service Officer Multicultural Award

Winner



Senior Protective Service Officer Ali Kalim

Senior Protective Services Officer, Ali Kalim, has shared his Islamic faith in efforts to forge greater understanding and respect between his fellow Protective Services Officers and local Islamic communities. Ali has accomplished this by arranging visits to Mosques for Protective Services Officers as well as attendance at various Islamic religious festivals. Ali's exemplary work has helped provide a positive image and greater understanding of Islam in his workplace.

Police Multicultural Media Award

Winner



Senior Constable Ding Cai

Multicultural Liaison Officer for the Police Eastern Division, Senior Constable Ding Cai, demonstrates a longstanding commitment to creating meaningful relationships between Victoria Police and multicultural communities. Given his fluency in Mandarin and Cantonese, Senior Constable Cai focuses especially on media presentations to Chinese communities – and regularly visits primary and secondary schools to bridge the gap between educators and Mandarin-speaking parents.

Police Multicultural Media Award

Winner



Sarah Vanin

When a spate of drownings occurred last summer, Victoria Police Senior Media Advisor Sarah Vanin took action to save lives. Developing a comprehensive media strategy in partnership with the Victoria Police's Priority and Safer Communities Division, Sarah's initiative included a series of targeted, informative stories to raise water safety awareness – especially among Chinese and Indian communities, which were over-represented in drowning incidents. Sarah's water safety efforts ran successfully for several weeks across the high-risk January period.



Premier's Award for Community Harmony

Selected by the Premier of Victoria, this award recognises an individual and an organisation that have made a significant contribution to increasing understanding, acceptance and cooperation between different faith and cultural groups.

Winner - Organisation



Gurdwara Siri Guru Nanak Darbar Officer

Established in 2019, Gurdwara Sri Guru Nanak Darbar (SGND), Officer, is a Sikh community organisation providing a platform for multicultural collaboration, interfaith dialogue, health access, crisis response and community development across Victoria. SGND delivers inclusive, measurable initiatives that foster cultural understanding, strengthen social cohesion and support vulnerable groups, expanding access to health, safety, education and environmental programs.

Winner - Individual



Ruchi Sharma

Ruchi Sharma is a member of Knox Council Advisory Committee, and former Secretary, Australia India Society of Victoria. Ruchi is an active community leader whose work fosters multicultural harmony through media, arts and civic engagement. She founded the Hello Zindagi Radio Show on Radio Eastern 98.1 FM, creating an inclusive platform that connects people across cultural, generational and faith backgrounds. Ruchi also established HuHaHo (Human Happiness & Hope), a wellbeing initiative that promotes inclusivity and collaboration.



Prevention of Family Violence Award

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

Winner



Luba Tanevski

Luba Tanevski has spent over 35 years supporting migrant and refugee women fleeing family violence. A migration agent and advocate, Luba helped shape life-saving legislation and has empowered thousands to rebuild their lives. Her lived experience, cultural insight and tireless leadership have transformed Victoria's response to family violence in multicultural communities.

Highly Commended



Benevolence Australia Inc.

Benevolence Australia Inc. is a community-led organisation fostering spiritual wellbeing and social cohesion. The organisation's flagship program, 'Good Beginnings', empowers Muslim couples through faith-aligned relationship education, promoting respectful marriages, preventing family violence and strengthening multicultural communities with culturally safe, values-driven tools for emotional literacy and equity.



Refugee Awards

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

Refugee Award categories include:

Achievement Award

Recognising the outstanding achievements of those who personally or professionally excelled through study, work, entrepreneurship or volunteering.

Leadership Award

Recognising those who demonstrated outstanding leadership within the community through study, work or volunteering.

Young Leader Award

Recognising those aged 25 years old and under who demonstrated outstanding leadership within the community through study, work or volunteering.

Business Award

Recognising businesses who support the employment, contribution and/or participation of those who arrived as refugees or asylum seekers.

Refugee Achievement Award

Winner



Peter Cinzah

Peter Cinzah is a proactive community leader fostering unity and inclusion across Victoria. His work supports refugees, asylum seekers and diverse communities through youth sports, education, women's programs and cultural events. Peter builds strong cross-cultural connections and promotes diversity through advocacy, training, and research. As a multicultural ambassador with the Migrant Worker Centre, Peter delivers work rights awareness workshops and contributes to bilingual resources in Burmese and English.

Highly Commended



Sarah Birara Nega

Sarah Birara Nega is a community leader and advocate supporting newly arrived migrants, refugees and asylum seekers. Through her work at Drummond Street Services, she has broken down barriers to access, built inclusive programs and empowered marginalised communities with compassion, resilience and a deep commitment to human rights and social justice.

Refugee Leadership Award

Winner



Parsu Budathoki

Parsu Budathoki is a former refugee and community leader whose work spans education, health and cultural inclusion. Parsu founded two Nepali language schools, advocates for inclusive healthcare, and empowers Bhutanese-Nepali communities through service, mediation and leadership. These efforts build lasting pathways for cohesion, wellbeing and multicultural harmony across the state.

Highly Commended



Mabor Majur Chadhuol

Mabor Majur Chadhuol is a clinical epidemiologist, public health expert and educator. As Founding Director of the Centre for Migrant and Refugee Health, Mabor leads trauma-informed programs that empower refugee and multicultural communities. His work in multicultural health, policy and education continues to shape equitable systems and inspire future leaders across Victoria.

Refugee Young Leader Award

Winner



Yuwaluxshayan Kannan

Yuwaluxshayan Kannan is a young leader and advocate from a refugee background. As a member of the Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network Australia, Yuwaluxshayan has championed refugee youth empowerment at policy levels. Through school leadership, mentoring and advocacy, he has created opportunities for participation, contribution and belonging across Victoria's multicultural communities.

Highly Commended



Harambee Homework Club

The young tutors of Harambee Homework Club consists of 12 secondary and university students from refugee backgrounds in Bendigo. Through mentorship, cultural leadership and educational support, they empower younger peers to thrive academically and socially, building confidence, connection and inclusion across South Sudanese, Karen and Hazara communities.

Refugee Business Award

Winner



Arabic Welfare Incorporated

Arabic Welfare Incorporated is a not-for-profit organisation empowering Arabic-speaking communities across Victoria. Through culturally responsive casework, education, advocacy and group programs, individuals are supported to overcome settlement challenges, build social connections and participate fully in Australian society. The organisation promotes wellbeing, inclusion and long-term independence.

Highly Commended



Mohammad Jamshid Mohammadi

Mohammad Jamshid Mohammadi is a business leader and mentor who empowers refugees and migrants through employment, training and inclusion. Through his company ‘Remarkable Construction’, Mohammad has supported dozens of individuals to gain trade skills, achieve financial independence and launch their own businesses, strengthening multicultural communities across Victoria through opportunity and leadership.



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

Winner



Bachar Houli Foundation

The Bachar Houli Foundation empowers young Australian Muslims and multicultural communities through sport, leadership and education. The Foundation's culturally inclusive programs promote participation, representation and social cohesion, creating pathways for personal growth, community connection and mutual respect, while transforming sport into a platform for unity and opportunity across Victoria.

Highly Commended



Diana Lin

Diana Lin is a community leader advancing cultural diversity in the AFL through her role on the Box Hill Hawks Board. Diana fosters inclusion by engaging Chinese communities, diversifying sponsorships, and creating culturally inclusive events. This bridges sport and multiculturalism to strengthen participation, representation and community connection in Victoria's eastern suburbs.



Victorian Public Sector Diversity and Inclusion Enhancement Award

Recognising a Victorian Government department or agency that has demonstrated outstanding commitment to diversity and inclusion by improving outcomes for multicultural communities.

Winner

The logo for Northern Health, featuring the words "Northern Health" in a blue sans-serif font.

Northern Health

Northern Health delivers inclusive, culturally responsive care across Melbourne's outer north. Guided by its Cultural Responsiveness Plan, it embeds equity in clinical practice, workforce development and governance. Northern Health co-designs services with multicultural communities to ensure safe, respectful and accessible healthcare that reflects the region's rich cultural diversity.

Highly Commended

The logo for VETASSESS, featuring a stylized orange and green icon to the left of the word "VETASSESS" in a teal sans-serif font.

VETASSESS

VETASSESS supports multiculturalism in Victoria by recognising migrant skills and qualifications across hundreds of occupations. As Australia's leading assessment authority for skilled migration, the global business empowers diverse communities to access employment, contribute to the workforce, and thrive. VETASSESS advances equity, inclusion and social cohesion through fair, merit-based recognition.



Youth Leadership Award

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

Winner



COOK4CALD

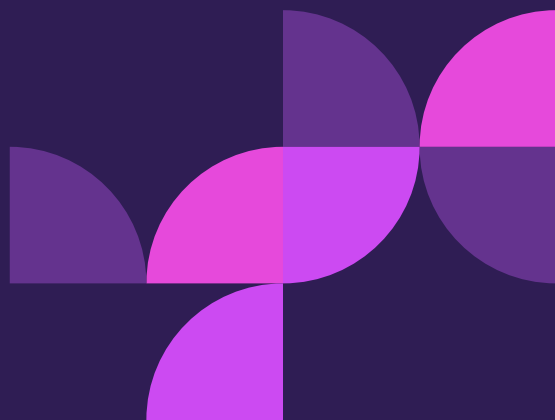
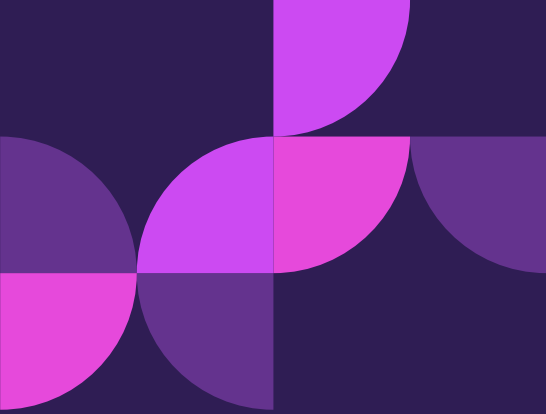
COOK4CALD is a youth-led charity addressing food insecurity in Melbourne's South-East through culturally inclusive meal programs. Founded by young people, it empowers multicultural youth to lead with purpose, delivering halal, vegan-friendly meals and hosting community events that foster connection, celebrate diversity and strengthen social inclusion.

Highly Commended



Adriel Abinav Appathurai

Adriel Abinav Appathurai is a medical student and youth advocate committed to health equity, multiculturalism and empowerment for young people. Through lived experience and leadership, Adriel influences policy and programs at all levels, creating pathways for young people to thrive and ensure their voices are represented in health, education and community decision-making.



Victorian Multicultural Honour Roll

Recognising the efforts of individuals who have made exceptional and lasting contributions to multiculturalism in Victoria.

Cristina Ponce Abela
Dr Raju Adhikari
Dr Ponniah Anandajayasekeram
Achol Arow
Suzy Bourdamis
Bhakta Dasa
Dr Teresa De Fazio OAM
Nyaruon Deng
Vedran Drakulić OAM
Sukhvinder (Sunny) Singh Duggal
Cora Fuentes-Mahnic
Dr Adolfo Gentile
Berhan Ismael Jaber
Rana Shahid Javed
Helen Kalimniou
Angelos Terrence Kenos
Eleftheria Lalopoulos
Feifei Liao

Eugenia Mitrakas OAM
Cecilia Rebecca Mphande
Selliah Nalliah
Tammy Nguyen
Kifarkis Nissan
Rev Deacon George Piech Meat
Pavan Kumar Rangaraju
Silvana Raydan
Roxanne Sarthou
Nilaufer Singh
Salvatore Sposato
Junxi Su
Anna Thimyoë Takluem
Ali Agha Wali Zada
Dr Bruce Wong
Ali Yaghobi
Mohammed Yassin
Xiaobei Ye



Commemoration of service Former VMC Commissioners

Nine Commissioners of the Victorian Multicultural Commission (VMC) concluded their terms of service in September 2025.

The VMC greatly appreciates their visionary leadership and continued advocacy. Through service at the VMC, the Commissioners championed collaboration, deep community engagement and strengthened multicultural communities across Victoria.

Bwe Thay Deputy Chairperson
Gabrielle Marchetti Community Representative Commissioner
Krushnadevsinh (Kano) Ravalji Youth Commissioner
Bill Papastergiadis OAM Commissioner
Jennifer Huppert OAM Commissioner
Dr Mohamed Mohideen OAM JP Commissioner
Nyangak (Lizzy) Kuoth Commissioner
Silvia Renda Commissioner
Tarang Chawla Commissioner

Bwe Thay

Deputy Chairperson

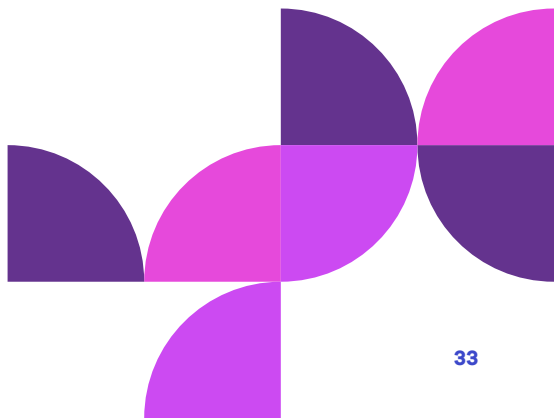


September 2019 to September 2025

Bwe Thay 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



September 2023 to September 2025

Gabrielle Marchetti 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 welcomed the opportunity to champion the rights and needs of multicultural and multifaith communities across the state; promote the full participation of these communities in social, cultural, economic and political life; and advocate for equal access to Victorian services.

Krushnadevsinh (Kano) Ravalji Youth Commissioner



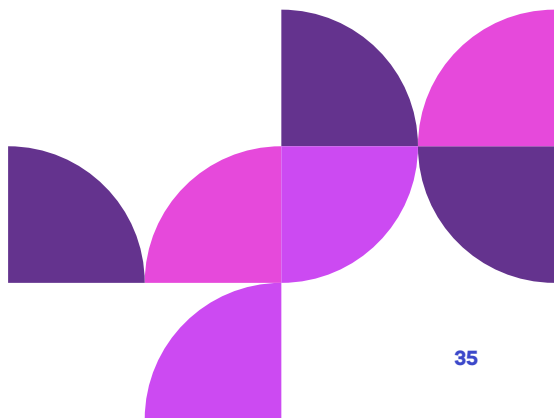
September 2023 to September 2025

Kano Ravalji is the founder of Third Culture Australia and a 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, Kano aimed to build a more inclusive future where young people, especially those from diverse backgrounds, are seen, heard, and equipped to lead.



Bill Papastergiadis OAM

Commissioner



September 2021 to September 2025

Bill Papastergiadis OAM 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 The Melbourne Humanities Foundation.

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

Jennifer Huppert OAM

Commissioner



September 2021 to September 2025

Jennifer Huppert OAM 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 Mohamed Mohideen OAM JP Commissioner



September 2021 to September 2025

Dr Mohamed Mohideen OAM JP 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 working with multifaith and multicultural communities 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 as 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 its immediate Past President, 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.

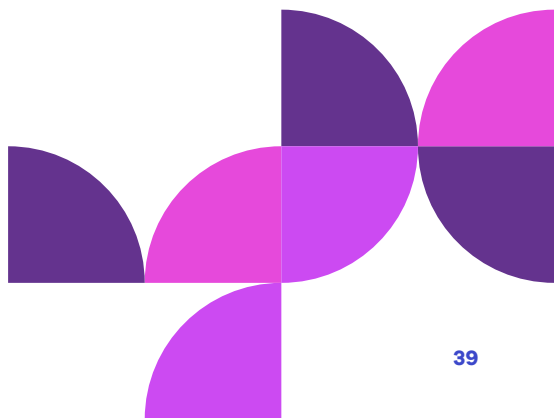
Nyangak (Lizzy) Kuoth Commissioner



September 2021 to September 2025

Whimsical, wise and courageous, Lizzy Kuoth 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 brought 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

Commissioner



September 2021 to September 2025

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 represented the VMC at the Courts Services Victoria Human Rights Reference Committee.

Tarang Chawla

Commissioner



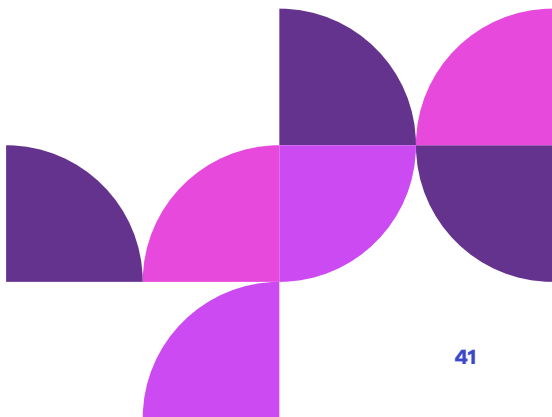
September 2021 to September 2025

Tarang Chawla 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.



Thank you

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