

VICTORIAN **MULTICULTURAL** AWARDS FOR **EXCELLENCE** 2021

VICTORIAN
MULTICULTURAL COMMISSION
multicultural
commission
strengthening our community



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Governor of Victoria
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MESSAGE FROM THE GOVERNOR



The past year has again brought many challenges. But it has shown us too that we are at our best when we work together: to support one another, and to ensure community harmony and equity.

Many from amongst Victoria's diverse cultures have been leaders in this regard, not just within their own communities, but right across the State, helping to ensure the safety and well-being of us all.

4 I am so pleased that this year the Victorian Multicultural Awards for Excellence can be held in person, and that we can welcome to Government House the nominees and their families, colleagues and friends, as well as everyone connected with the organisation of these Awards.

On behalf of all Victorians, I acknowledge and thank each nominee, and congratulate those who will be named as the Award recipients. Individually, your contributions are excellent. Collectively, you help to define our State and its continuing peace and prosperity.

The Hon. Linda Dessau AC
Governor of Victoria

MESSAGE FROM THE PREMIER



Multiculturalism is the beating heart of our state.

For generations, families and communities have come to this state for a better life - for

opportunity, to contribute, and to build a brighter future for their kids.

And the communities who've made Victoria their home, have played a critical role in building the Victoria we know today.

Over the past two years, Victoria's multicultural communities have faced extraordinary challenges.

But together and united, you've responded with overwhelming kindness, compassion and courage.

Your instinct to look out for one another when times are tough has made our communities stronger and kept every Victorian safe.

The Victorian Multicultural Awards are a chance to celebrate these individuals and communities for their leadership - you have made our state better, fairer and stronger.

And on behalf of our state and our Government - thank you.

The Hon. Daniel Andrews MP
Premier of Victoria

MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER



It has been a great privilege to work with so many of our multicultural communities this year and I'm honoured to formally acknowledge the Victorians who have selflessly committed to our multicultural society.

I am proud of the remarkable achievements of the Victorians who make our state such a welcoming, inclusive and wonderful place to live.

It is my great pleasure to support the Victorian Multicultural Awards for Excellence and to celebrate the dedication of the many people who strengthen diversity.

On behalf of the Victorian Government, I extend my thanks to the Victorian Multicultural Commission for coordinating the Awards.

I personally thank all the recipients and nominees for their extraordinary contributions to our multicultural state and am proud to acknowledge them through these awards.

The Hon. Ros Spence MP

Minister for Multicultural Affairs

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRPERSON



As another challenging year ends, I am so proud to recognise and celebrate the achievements of our multicultural communities.

This year, I was privileged to witness the tireless efforts of my fellow Victorians supporting each other and helping each other stay connected during the times of crisis.

The Victorian Multicultural Awards for Excellence recognise the Victorians whose determination and dedication strengthen multiculturalism and cultural diversity in our state. I am honoured to be celebrating the individuals and organisations who have supported and empowered multicultural communities.

On behalf of the Commission, I offer my sincere congratulations and gratitude to not only the winners and highly commended recipients but to all who were nominated.

I thank you and wish you all the best in the future as you continue to strengthen multiculturalism and social cohesion in Victoria.

Vivienne Nguyen AM

Chairperson, Victorian Multicultural Commission

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF **SERVICE TO THE VICTORIAN MULTICULTURAL COMMUNITY**

This award recognises the invaluable contributions of former Commissioners of the Victorian Multicultural Commission to Victoria's culturally diverse communities.

Recipients

- Tina Hosseini
- Khayshie Tilak Ramesh
- Walter Rapoport
- Mohammed Yassin
- Rosaria Zarro
- David Nyuol Vincent



REFUGEE ADVOCACY AWARD

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

Winner

Natalija Nesvadba

Natalija Nesvadba is the manager of the Multicultural Services Unit at Mercy Health and has been fundamental in delivering projects that are tailored to migrants and refugee women and their families. Some of the projects include setting up a special clinic for pregnant Burmese refugees, providing support to young women who have experienced female circumcision and working with local community leaders to provide information on how to access services at the hospital. Natalija is always identifying ways to improve outcomes for migrant and refugee women's health needs, and ensuring these are front of mind for Mercy Health as an organisation.

Highly Commended

Khalil Ali Khalil

Khalil Ali Khalil has dedicated his time to assist new refugees from Eritrean, Ethiopian and Sudanese communities with their schooling for many years. He regularly assists single parents with school drop-offs and acts as a role model for the children. Khalil's assistance has allowed the children to succeed in school and has helped single parents access employment and improve their language skills. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Khalil provided important information on the lockdowns, personal protective equipment and essential food to these families. Khalil's efforts to engage families at an early stage has helped young children stay in school and families to better connect with the community.



SPORT AWARD

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

Winner

Chris Hatzoglou, Sunshine Heights Cricket Club

Through his role as president of the Sunshine Heights Cricket Club, Chris Hatzoglou, spearheaded the All Endeavouring Each Achieving initiative to encourage people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to participate in sport. Through Chris's efforts, the club's participation has grown from 50 to over 200 people. Chris has helped create an induction program, advocated on diversity and inclusion, lobbied for better facilities, raised sponsorship money and helped build capability in volunteers including coaches both senior and junior. His efforts have helped many community members resettle in Australia and has given them an environment through cricket to feel safe and welcome.

Highly Commended

Sam Atukorala

Sam Atukorala is a well-known community leader in Victoria, a respected mentor to people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and a professional in the community sector. He is an AFL Diversity Program Ambassador and a Community Ambassador for Cricket Australia. He has organised footy trips, events and several key projects in Shepparton to support young people from new and emerging communities to engage in soccer. Sam's significant contribution to these projects not only helped break down barriers and build sustainable relationships but also created a smooth transition for young people from new and emerging communities to settle into life in Australia. Cricket Club. Chris has been instrumental in supporting these young people financially, socially and emotionally as they make connections in their new community.



YOUTH LEADERSHIP AWARD

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

Winner

Shenei Meisi Penaia

Shenei Meisi Penaia has been a frontrunner in streamlining COVID-19 information to her Maori and Pacific Islander community, especially to elders. She has worked with The Pasefika Navigators, a youth advocacy and advisory group, to circulate reputable health information into her community to debunk misinformation on COVID-19 related issues. The success of these collective efforts promoted participation in vaccination days exclusive for Maori and Pacific Island people.

Shenei has also assisted Pacific Island Creative Arts Australia (PICAA) in putting together a cultural appropriate food and essentials drive for families in need.



COMMUNITY RESPONSE AND RECOVERY AWARD

This award recognises people, groups or organisations that have directly supported multicultural communities impacted by a crisis, or people, groups or organisations of diverse backgrounds that have volunteered to support crisis response and recovery efforts in Victoria.

Winners

Marwo Mohammed Salat

Drawing on her language skills in Somali, Arabic and English, Marwo Mohamed Salat was instrumental in addressing multiple needs of local African communities profoundly impacted by COVID-19.

Marwo communicated and coordinated needs for isolation requirements and maintained regular contact with people in public housing. She facilitated urgent food, medical and household supplies, personal and cultural needs, and coordinated with local charities, government agencies and service providers to ensure ongoing support and comfort. This included arranging devices for remote schooling and other communication technologies to keep the affected residents informed.

Culturally and linguistically diverse communities representing Somalia, Eretria, Sudan, Ethiopia were greatly supported by Marwo's tireless efforts to coordinate the needs of affected residents.

AfriAus iLEAC INC & LUVPACKS PARTNERS

AfriAus iLEAC (Inspire Lead Educate Advocate for Change) provided 533 'Luvpacks' to single mothers, women with large families, under/unemployed women, women with disability and other vulnerable or emerging communities during the COVID-19 pandemic. Luvpacks comprised food, baby necessities, household items and personal protective equipment.

AfriAus iLEAC also delivered health information and COVID vaccine online sessions. Their efforts increased food security for community members who were isolating, which reduced stress, anxiety and fear of going without.

The specific needs of the multicultural communities were addressed within a culturally appropriate strategy, which has increased trust amongst community members. Many community members were supported by AfriAus iLEAC, including people from Liberian, Congolese, Sierra Leonean, Malawian, Rohingya and South African backgrounds.

West Welcome Wagon Inc

West Welcome Wagon provided essential items including clothing, furniture, bedding, linen, kitchen items, electrical appliances and whitegoods to refugees and asylum seekers in Melbourne's west. Partnering with community kitchens, two new projects delivered large volumes of weekly food bundles and sanitary items via contactless delivery during recent bushfires and lockdowns.

West Welcome Wagon delivered 129,500 prepared meals to community organisations across the state despite many local kitchens shutting down. They also leveraged partnerships with RACV and Lifeline to communicate mental health messaging. Over 875 households were supported by the organisation across refugee and asylum seeker communities from over 30 countries in the Brimbank, Wyndham, Hobsons Bay, Maribyrnong, Moonee Valley and Melton local government areas.

Highly Commended

Moustafa Fahour OAM

Moustafa Fahour worked tirelessly in 2020 and 2021 to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Moustafa created community hubs to provide assistance to Muslims in isolation, welfare checks, food support and also explained restrictions to those in isolation.

Additionally, he organised online community forums to inform Muslim and Lebanese

communities on vaccine safety and ways to reduce community spread, as well as explaining the financial payments available to those in isolation.

He organised a testing centre at the Islamic Museum of Australia and tasked volunteers to contact families in isolation, while also recommending Muslim psychologists for those experiencing mental health issues.

Tenants Victoria

Tenants Victoria provided legal support to tenants from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to understand and navigate newly legislated pandemic protections and rental grants throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

They assembled a team of skilled multilingual community engagement officers who speak Dari/Farsi, Arabic, Dinka, Mandarin, Cantonese, Punjabi and Malay to support diverse communities in their own language and ensure they were informed of their rights. Tenants Victoria engaged with renters creatively through online means: Facebook Live chats, Instagram Live chats, Zoom talks and other social/traditional print media channels.

The team translated resources in five languages spoken by communities facing pandemic financial hardship – Arabic, Chinese, Dari/Farsi, Dinka and Punjabi – and delivered online training sessions, information sessions and distributed Tenants Victoria's posters and booklets within key local government areas.



ARTS AWARD

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

Winner

SalamFest Inc.

SalamFest is an annual cultural event showcasing the depth and breadth of Muslim arts, culture, food and spiritual traditions in Melbourne as a creative response to Islamophobia. The arts festival is for all Victorians and aims to boost cross-cultural social cohesion for Muslim communities, Muslim women's collectives, Turkish communities, Indonesian communities, Arab speaking Muslim communities and faith-based schools.

The festival is held at iconic venues like Queen Victoria Market and Deakins Edge and actively surveys patrons on their support, awareness, and positive perceptions of Muslims. Since it started, Salamfest has created positive change in awareness, support and understanding of cross-cultural communities.

Highly Commended

Cross Encounters

Cross Encounters is a performing arts collective running a series of programs and events that focus on Australian-Asian performing arts, cultural expression and arts residency programs. Their 2020 production *A Stone's Throw* was the first ever professional physical theatre piece combining Chinese and Australian performers under a Chinese director, which attracted more than 550 audience members during the last two show seasons.

Cross Encounters establishes pathways for emerging artists from Asian backgrounds to develop professional careers by offering them different positions in all relevant workshops.

Kimba Thompson Blak Dot Gallery

Kimba Thompson is an Australian Indigenous woman who set up one of the first Global Indigenous Art Galleries in Australia, Blak Dot Gallery. The Gallery, which is celebrating its 10th birthday this year, has been instrumental in promoting the careers of many First Nations artists and curators.

Blak Dot Gallery works with a strong network of First Nations artists from all over Victoria and Australia and has an ongoing commitment to ensuring First Nations artists have opportunities and access to a professional gallery environment. The gallery has supported and collaborated closely with global First Nations peoples, including First Nation Australians, Latinx, Pasifika, Maori, Eritrean, Samoan and East Asian artistic communities.



BUSINESS AWARD

This award recognises businesses that provide outstanding service to multicultural communities in Victoria and are leading the way in encouraging diversity in the workplace.

The 2021 Business Award is sponsored by the Environment Protection Authority Victoria.

Winners

Liliana Bravo Quiroz - Casa Bonita Lifestyle

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Liliana Bravo Quiroz created Casa Bonita Lifestyle and Casa Bonita Hub to empower and educate migrant women on how to start a business, how to run a business and how to achieve financial freedom.

The retail arm of Casa Bonita sources ethical and sustainably produced crafts from Indigenous communities in Colombia and Ecuador. The shared workspace in Melbourne's west provides a culturally safe space for learning and education.

Liliana has empowered migrant women who have come to Australia looking for a new life, to learn English and find new ways to grow as professionals. Her ongoing efforts have supported migrant women from Turkey, Colombia, Spain and Mexico.

Australian Multicultural Community Services

Australian Multicultural Community Services (AMCS) delivers services to Victorian multicultural communities to support older Victorians to live safely at home for as long as possible.

AMCS' services include 550 home care packages, entry-level home care support, information, referral and support services, mobile information vans, social support groups, centre-based respite, moving for life programs, volunteer visiting program and companionship, food aid and financial relief.

In addition to helping jobseekers access and secure work, AMCS also directly employs many newly arrived migrants and refugees.

Highly Commended

Think HQ

Think HQ delivered over 500 distinctive COVID-19 campaigns since March 2020, specifically targeting and supporting multilingual communities with translated assets into 58 languages.

CultureVerse, Think HQ's diverse communications arm, worked as a supplier to the Victorian Government in translating and distributing COVID-19 information, which directly helped many diverse communities across Victoria to remain safe and look out for one another throughout the pandemic, armed with resources they can understand.

Think HQ has also worked with WorkSafe Victoria to deliver a campaign that informed culturally and linguistically diverse workers and their employers about the safety aspects of their roles and responsibilities, and the ways WorkSafe supports them.

AGAPI Care Inc.

AGAPI Care provides tailored services to people with disability of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and their families. They have assisted many families with navigation of the National Disability Insurance Scheme and provide support in participants' preferred language. They also have an advocacy radio program on 3XY Radio Hellas every Tuesday, providing information about the disability sector, mental health and aged care in Greek and English.

AGAPI Care has also provided food relief, support programs and welfare checks for vulnerable community members, which have supported over 3000 people.



EMERGENCY SERVICES AWARD

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

Winner

Foodbank Victoria

Foodbank Victoria opened a pop-up store in the heart of Melbourne's CBD to cater specifically for international students. They provide free, culturally appropriate food in a safe and welcoming environment.

Having received over 54,000 visits, the store has far surpassed its original expectation of operating for a few months and catering up to 10,000 attendees. An average of 500 students per day came for enough free food to sustain them for a week with the dignity of choice.

The store has supported international students of all ages from over 131 countries, including Brazil, China, Columbia, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Philippines, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand and Vietnam. Many of these students arrived in Melbourne just before the first semester of tertiary study was set to begin in 2020, and just before the pandemic caused mass unemployment in their sectors of employment.



HEALTH AWARD

This award recognises health practitioners, researchers and organisations that provide outstanding health care, support or services to multicultural communities.

Winner

Cabrini Outreach - Asylum Seeker and Refugee Health

Cabrini Asylum Seeker Health Services address a pressing unfunded gap in primary health care and specialist mental health services for people of all cultures, faiths and ethnicities seeking asylum. They provide specialist medical care for communities who would otherwise be ineligible for mainstream public mental health care and unable to afford private specialist care.

All these services are provided free of charge and include culturally and linguistically sensitive primary nurse-led care, specialised mental health support, engagement to access welfare and supports and advocacy on policy.

Many positive case studies have come out of the program during the added stresses and uncertainties of the pandemic and lockdowns.

Highly Commended

The Harmony Study Team

Harmony is a primary health model to develop, implement and evaluate a culturally competent intervention for every member of a GP clinic's staff, while also responding to the needs of their migrant and refugee patients experiencing family violence. The clinics involved are largely in Melbourne's North-West and South-East local government areas and in areas with high COVID-19 impact. Some communities residing in these areas are recognised as having limited English speaking proficiency and knowledge of the Australian healthcare system.

Harmony developed a framework for culturally competent family violence training for primary care clinicians that provides a model of care to ensure diverse victim-survivors receive the support they require.



JUSTICE AWARD

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

Winner

South-East Monash Legal Service

South-East Monash Legal Service developed the flagship program 'Sporting Change' to support young people from diverse backgrounds to engage constructively in their local communities. The program uses sport to educate young people about the justice system. It also uses the services of an integrated school lawyer to increase young people's access to and awareness of the justice system. Participants were empowered to understand their rights and responsibilities – affording them the opportunity for early intervention in legal problems. Some participants have stated that Sporting Change was inspirational in their decision to study law, youth work or community development.

Communities benefited include young people from a range of different backgrounds, including Pasifika, Afghan, Indian and South Sudanese.

Highly Commended

Sundeep Aulakh

Sundeep Aulakh has supported cultural change in the prison system by working with prisoners from multicultural and multifaith backgrounds. He has advocated for prisoners who have specific dietary requirements, religious accoutrements and requirements to perform religious duties.

His mission has maintained a sense of dignity, welfare, safety and better mental health outcomes for inmates of multicultural and multifaith backgrounds.



LOCAL GOVERNMENT AWARD

This award recognises government bodies for major initiatives that meet the needs of their culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse communities.

Winner

Major Road Projects Victoria and Netflow

Major Road Projects Victoria and Netflow created sustainable opportunities for priority jobseekers and encouraged subcontractors to employ underrepresented job seekers. The Western Roads Upgrade project has already delivered in excess of 1,800 equivalent full-time roles, and once the effect on the supply chain is considered, this will come to a total of over 4,000 equivalent full-time roles. A large proportion of roles have been filled by residents of Melbourne's western suburbs, with an incredibly diverse range of cultures and backgrounds represented, including African, Indian and Vietnamese communities.

Other projects with great outcomes include partnerships with Western Chances, Western Health and the Western Bulldogs Community Foundation.

Highly Commended

City of Whittlesea - International Student Wellbeing Hub Project

City of Whittlesea delivered an International Student Wellbeing Hub project in their outer metro Melbourne local government area. The council advocated for and supported international students with tailored information on health, wellbeing, housing, employment and leisure and economic development to ensure they felt welcomed and engaged, especially in response to the changing circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic. The project fostered cross-cultural understanding and has directly engaged well over 350 international students. A local international student project reference group was established, as well as several other initiatives to engage international students creatively, provide food support and mental health wellbeing support.



COMMUNITY INNOVATION AWARD

This award recognises projects or programs that have been established in the last 18 months that use outside-the-box thinking to address a problem facing a diverse community and that shares knowledge about a culture with a wider audience.

Winners

Latin Stories Australia

Nuestras Voces is a community project run by Latin Stories Australia which features migrant and refugee experiences who arrived in Melbourne between the 1960s and 1980s through the eyes of Spanish-speaking communities. In total, 32 members of different Spanish speaking countries and communities trusted Latin Stories Australia with their life story to be presented to the wider community via either a documentary, a findings report, an online publication and/or a podcast. Nuestras Voces highlights the community members' contributions to local communities and Victoria with the aim to increase understanding and engagement between different generations and multicultural communities.

The Deakin Centre for Refugee Employment, Advocacy, Training and Education (CREATE)

Deakin University developed a successful career clinic tailored for refugee graduates to find meaningful employment.

The scheme supported participants who come from 25 different countries, with the largest number of participants hailing from the Afghan, Iranian, and Iraqi communities. The clinic provided support through mentoring, networking, career planning and understanding of different visas and employment conditions. Over 60% of participants who completed the career clinics in 2020 found meaningful employment with the clinic's support.

Western Bulldogs Community Foundation

The Western Bulldogs Community Foundation was engaged by Melton City Council to recruit and collaborate with a group of young people, to support and build the capacity of community leaders. They delivered community-based support and leadership around outbreak management, COVID-19 prevention and mental and social wellbeing. This project has supported 47 young people with paid employment on a short-term project. Beyond paid work, all participants received critical training in youth mental health, COVID-19 safety and online design. The empowerment of young people allowed important messaging to reach some of the hardest-to-reach cohorts in the community in their own languages. Program participants came from various backgrounds including South Sudan, New Zealand, Samoa, Myanmar and Australia.

Highly Commended

AMES Australia/Parks Victoria

Werribee Gardens Food Project greatly benefited the diverse communities in Wyndham and surrounding CALD and refugee communities, by providing nutritious food to disadvantaged families in the local area free of charge during the 2020-21 COVID-19 lockdowns.

AMES Australia used its position as a migrant and refugee settlement agency to leverage the participation of volunteers from local

diverse communities. This led to a collaboration between Parks Victoria, AMES Australia, the Sikh Temple and leaders from local communities to develop a planting and harvesting strategy. In the first year of the project, 2000 kg of vegetables were produced by the project.

African Focus, St Paul's African House

The 'Our voices are important in Greater Shepparton' project was the first of its kind to perform an in-depth survey of 255 adults of African background in the Greater Shepparton area. It created a broader understanding and acceptance of different African nationalities and cultures of the team members involved.

Several special reports have also been shared with key stakeholders to provide valuable information and encourage change around particular topics, including COVID-19 vaccination rollout, language and interpreter services through Monash University and tailored support to assist the African community to gain employment. This project also gave paid employment to newcomers to the workforce who have since gone on to develop their careers in other meaningful employment.



MEDIA AWARD

This award recognises outstanding reporting of issues of importance to diverse communities and reporting that contributes to Victorians' improved cross-cultural understanding.

Winner

Channel 31 Melbourne

Channel 31 delivered a digital initiative called the Community Builder program to focus on minority, disability, health, multicultural, youth and environmental causes. Channel 31 accommodates 140 internships every year sourced from diverse cultural backgrounds providing experience in content production and broadcast operations. The channel has also worked with 32 multicultural producers, supporting the production of content reflecting and sharing the culture and lifestyles of their communities. Many of these programs are broadcast in non-English languages and were important for health messaging during the COVID-19 pandemic. A broad range of communities have used Channel 31 as a channel for connectivity and information, including faith-based communities and culturally diverse elderly Victorians.

Highly Commended

Neelima Choahan

Neelima Choahan is a reporter and digital producer who produced a news package focussing on an Indian woman with a lived experience of domestic violence and coercive control. The story helped start the dialogue about how gender roles can lead to abuse and be used to control women. This has been particularly important for Southeast Asian migrant women. The story also examined the debate over criminalising coercive control, especially when considering the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse communities. This feature promotes cross-cultural understanding, enabling authorities to recognise abuse and help women. It also helped vulnerable communities recognise the difference between abuse and cultural gender norms, and seek pathways for protection.

Radio Haanji

Radio Haanji has delivered a wide range of critical information to Indian communities through its community radio station. It provided COVID response initiatives to ensure the community was aware of the latest restrictions during lockdowns.

Radio Haanji also translated and broadcast news to keep their listeners updated with relevant current affairs.

Through a partnership with Victoria Police on the 'Be Alert, Be Safe' campaign, listeners were made aware of how they can protect themselves and their loved ones against scams and other legal issues whilst sharing their own stories in language.

Additionally, Radio Haanji communicated information on voting, grants for financial hardship and campaigns on permanent parent visas.



EDUCATION AWARDS

These awards recognise early childhood services, schools, vocational education, training settings and not-for-profit organisations that deliver outstanding learning and teaching programs, which enhance the social inclusion, wellbeing and education outcomes for students from CALD communities.

Winner – Early Childhood Education

Bridge Road Kindergarten

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Bridge Road Kindergarten uses a family-centred approach to develop innovative practices that support settlement outcomes for newly arrived Victorians from migrant and refugee backgrounds. They seek to increase educator knowledge, break down barriers of engagement between families and educators and increase the capacity and confidence of educators to make appropriate referrals. Bridge Road Kindergarten has also implemented several programs to support the local community, including building a translated resource library and providing emergency food, clothing and materials for home learning. In January 2020, the Bridge Road Kindergarten Community Table supported almost 300 families by donating resources to families so they could attend the kindergarten program.

Highly Commended – Early Childhood Education

Foundation House - Kinder to School Transition Project

The Foundation House worked in partnership with the Department of Education and Training to develop the Kinder to School Project: a community-based, co-designed initiative to improve early childhood development and school readiness for pre-school children and their families who are of refugee and asylum-seeking backgrounds. The Kinder to School project worked with four different language communities (Arabic, Dinka, Hakha Chin and Karen) to consult, plan, develop, translate, trial and create resources for families and professionals. The Project developed six free resources in four languages and widely distributed them in the community. The innovative program has raised awareness regarding the needs of refugee and asylum seeker background families in transitioning from kindergarten to school.

Winner – School Education

Hampton Park Primary School

The Hampton Park Primary School Community Hub provides an inclusive, supportive environment to develop and broaden parents' and caregivers' awareness of what they can do to support their children to engage in school and become active participants in the wider community. The Community Hub provides a welcoming and safe environment to develop friendships and support families to provide a wider range of experiences for their children.

The Hub has a playgroup, computer skill classes, craft classes, music classes for toddlers and story time. The Hub also provides English language classes to English as an Additional Language families. The classes have a broad focus of enhancing English language skills through conversational English classes, formalised lessons and purposeful engagement.

Highly Commended – School Education

Victorian School of Languages - South East

The Victorian School of Languages (VSL) South-East teaches 22 languages and delivers innovative teaching programs across their three centres to help families maintain their culture and community languages.

The programs include the VSL South-East Reading Challenge, which encourages children to read books in their own language. The

challenge motivates students to experience stories from their home and incorporates parents, grandparents and community members into the children's reading experience.

VSL South-East also organises guest speakers from multicultural communities, celebrates national, community and religious celebrations and festivals and encourages students to wear national dress to lessons.

VSL South-East reinforces the value of multicultural communities in Australia and encourages interaction with members of the greater language community.

Winner – Pre-accredited community-based Education and Training

Wellsprings for Women - Shipra Plander

Wellsprings for Women's Family Learning Partnership (FLP) Program engages socially isolated women and children from refugee and migrant backgrounds who face multiple complex barriers to participation.

The FLP program has pivoted between online and face-to-face learning, which has allowed women to strengthen their confidence with accessing community, education and other vital services online.

Since the first Melbourne lockdown, Wellsprings for Women has also sourced and distributed 140 free devices so learners and their families can stay connected. The program has had a

significant impact of communities and families, helping them stay connected, informed and engaged in their learning through lockdown and able to access to vital support services.

Winner – Vocational Education and Training Accredited Education & Training

Bendigo Kangan Institute

Bendigo Kangan Institute's Vocational English Department has delivered a suite of initiatives to support multicultural communities, including the Wrap Around program and the Adult Migrant English Program. The Wrap Around program equips students with skills to establish community networks, encourage community participation, social inclusion, work readiness, independence and personal wellbeing.

The Adult Migrant English Program provides free English language lessons to eligible migrants and humanitarian entrants aged 18 years and over. In addition to these programs, the Department has facilitated information sessions on topics such as COVID-19 vaccinations, job-seeking, legal services and health services.

Bendigo Kangan Institute also created a virtual campus community for student wellbeing and engagement, particularly engaging international students. These initiatives have delivered tangible differences to the experience of newly arrived communities and have assisted with their adjustment to a new environment.

Highly Commended – Vocational Education and Training Accredited Education & Training

RMIT & The Social Studio

The RMIT Certificate III in Clothing Production Teaching Team and The Social Studio have been delivering a training partnership for refugee youth in fashion since 2009, with more than 780 people engaged in both certified TAFE courses and pre-accreditation and pathway programs. Students receive formal education from RMIT while receiving support through extra studio access and English translations from The Social Studio.

This model supports young people from refugee backgrounds by providing a more flexible and supportive model for delivery in a social enterprise/community setting. The success of the partnership has led to the development of six new models of art based social enterprise serving diverse migrant and refugee communities across Australia.



POLICE AWARDS

These awards recognise outstanding contributions to multicultural harmony in the field of policing.

Winners – Police Annual Multicultural Award

Inspector Jason Forster

Inspector Jason Forster was instrumental in the implementation of the early culturally and linguistically diverse youth intervention as part of Victoria Police's anti-gang strategy program. Inspector Forster played a crucial role in identifying risk areas and implementing various culturally sensitive strategies to improve Victoria Police's intervention strategy.

Sergeant Mark Stephens

Sergeant Mark Stephens has worked for over 20 years as a Sergeant Prosecutor at the Melbourne Prosecution Unit. From the beginning of his time, he has developed worthwhile and trust-filled relationships with Koori Elders and multicultural communities to help community members reduce their offending behaviour.

Winner – Multicultural Media Award

Detective Senior Constable Kenny Lin

With his language and interpreting skills and, and accounting acumen, Detective Senior Constable Kenny Lin has provided valuable support to Victoria Police. His innovative social media crime prevention presentations have provided various Chinese communities important information to build harmony and reassurance amongst community members.

Winner – Police Community Exemplary Award

Dandenong Primary School

Dandenong Primary School partnered with local police to implement the Eyewatch platform, which identified barriers to family violence reporting and safety. In addition to Eyewatch, a second innovation was the Embedded Youth Outreach Program (EYOP), which paired a specialist youth worker and uniform police to assist young people who had recently been in custody. A series of training videos was produced featuring teachers working alongside the police and youth workers. This complex project enhanced connections between the school community, local multicultural community and local police.

Winners – Protective Service Officer Multicultural Award

Senior Protective Services Officer Pasko Zupan

Pasko Zupan is a Senior Protective Service Officer and is proudly of Croatian heritage. He is a cultural mediator between his community and Victoria Police and a trusted community member. Through soccer and other activities, he has enhanced community relationships by forging meaningful connections between Croatian, Vietnamese and Chinese communities.

PSO Senior Sergeant Serge Ruoppolo

Protective Service Officer Senior Sergeant Serge Ruoppolo was instrumental in advancing the Shrine of Remembrance project with the Shrine's police guards. Started in 2014, the project engaged the three mayors of the French towns of Fromelles, Montebrehain and Poizieres to help local school children learn about the battles that Australians fought in World War I and the relationship between Australia and France. The project has required much planning over the years and the participants have gained significant cross-national knowledge.



PREMIER'S AWARD FOR COMMUNITY HARMONY

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

Winner

Sikh Volunteers Australia

Sikh Volunteers Australia (SVA) is a non-profit volunteer organisation focusing on reducing distress in the community by providing free food to disadvantaged or needy individuals and families. It was founded by the Sikh community in Melbourne's south east in 2017 and now regularly helps feed homeless people in the municipalities of Casey and Frankston. Due to the 2020 bushfires and the COVID-19 pandemic, the service expanded to more areas to assist more vulnerable communities impacted and has played an active part in Victoria's crisis response and recovery efforts. On average, SVA delivers 800 meals every day, with over 100,000 free meals delivered in 7 months during 2020. SVA has 250 registered volunteers from all age groups and culturally diverse backgrounds who work cohesively to create a more engaged & peaceful multicultural society.

The Victorian Multicultural Commission would like to thank Environment Protection Authority Victoria for its sponsorship of the Business Award category for the Multicultural Awards for Excellence 2021.



WE ALL HAVE **A PART TO PLAY**

Laws protecting Victoria's environment mean we all have a part to play in preventing harm from pollution and waste.

The General Environmental Duty applies to all Victorians. Everyone must understand how our actions affect our environment and community, then take steps to minimise this impact.

For more information and resources to help you comply, visit epa.vic.gov.au

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To speak to someone, call Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National) on 131 450 and ask them to call EPA Victoria on 1300 372 842.

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