

Victorian Multicultural Commission Annual Report 2013-14



Enhancing Victoria's cultural, religious and linguistic diversity.

ANNUAL REPORT 2013-14

The 2013-14 Annual Report covers the core work of the Commission and its achievements within the context of its objectives and functions, as outlined in the *Multicultural Victoria Act 2011*.

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This report can also be viewed online at:
www.multicultural.vic.gov.au

Copies of this Annual Report can be obtained from the Victorian Multicultural Commission:

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Premier Gala Dinner Act
Photographer: Jorge de Araujo



Matthew Guy MLC
Minister for Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship
Minister for Planning
1 Spring St
Melbourne Vic 3000

Dear Minister,

In accordance with Section 21 of the *Multicultural Victoria Act (2011)*,
I have great pleasure in reporting on the Commission's operations
for the period 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chin Tan". The signature is stylized and includes a small triangle at the end.

Yours sincerely,
Chin Tan
CHAIRPERSON

strengthening our community



Throughout 2013–14, the Victorian Multicultural Commission (VMC) has continued to evolve and develop. It has continued to focus its energies and resources on effectively supporting and representing Victoria's culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities.

Our Commissioners are now well established in their roles and have continued to apply their broad range of skills, experience and knowledge to address the issues, challenges and opportunities facing our increasingly diverse society. The diversity of our Commissioners ensures our Commission continues to be broadly representative of the general community.

The research function of the Commission, which has been strengthened and expanded, has commenced a significant research project that will examine Children Protection Data Collection Systems and Practices for CALD Clients. This work will be completed prior to December 2014.

This year the Commission received 2,700 grant applications and provided \$5.55 million to the community through approximately 2,300 grants, with 260 of these being made to communities in regional Victoria.

The Commission consulted regularly with the community through its Commissioners, the Regional Advisory Councils (RACs) and 15 Community Consultations which were held across the State. Through these consultations, a number of service related issues were identified which will be fed back to the Government to inform the development of policy, legislation and service delivery. As Chairperson, I am committed to engaging with the Victorian public, as well as faith and community leaders to ensure that the changing needs of communities are acknowledged, understood and addressed in a timely and appropriate manner.

Our awards and recognition programs proved a highlight again this year. The highly anticipated Victorian Multicultural Awards for Excellence at Government House was a successful and rewarding event. More than 200 people and organisations were nominated for their outstanding service to Victoria's multicultural and wider community. Many of the nominees had taken on leadership roles within their communities and all have demonstrated a strong commitment to bettering their life, and more significantly, the lives of those around them (portraits of some are featured in this report). Each year I am moved and deeply inspired by the stories of the people recognised in these programs and the significant contribution they make towards community harmony, despite often having suffered hardship and trauma in their own lives.

Cultural Diversity Week was held from 15 to 23 March 2014 and was once again a great success. The Premier's Gala Dinner launched the celebrations, with nearly 1,500 people coming together to collectively celebrate their cultural diversity. The Gala Dinner was a spectacular and vibrant evening of multicultural dance, music and entertainment. The week culminated in the popular Viva Victoria Festival, where more than 43,500 people gathered to enjoy the festivities and celebrate multiculturalism at Federation Square.



Cultural Diversity Week continues to bring Victoria's many different and diverse communities together to celebrate the vibrancy of a multicultural community. In 2014, around 300 community groups, schools, workplaces and organisations hosted their own events during the week, making it a truly state-wide event. I congratulate and thank everyone that took part in and supported the week, especially our sponsors. It continues to be yet another example of the wonderful multicultural society we are so fortunate to enjoy here in Victoria.

The Commission in May 2014 hosted an event for the Australia-Asean delegation commemorating its 40th Anniversary. The delegation consisted of Ambassadors from Asean Countries and the event had guest speakers from the ECCV, Victoria Police, ICV and the Koori Court Unit of the Magistrates Court of Victoria.

In March 2014, the Government launched its new Multicultural policy, "Victoria's Advantage – Unity Diversity Opportunity". The policy re-emphasises the Government's commitment to multiculturalism and citizenship, including recognition of Victoria's cultural diversity as one of the state's most valuable assets.

I would like to extend my thanks to Matthew Guy MLC, Minister for Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship, and Minister for Planning, and to his predecessor the Hon. Nicholas Kotsiras MP, for their enthusiasm, ongoing support and their unwavering commitment to a multicultural Victoria.

I would also like to thank my fellow Commissioners and staff at the Commission for their support and hard work during the past year. It is a privilege to work with such a passionate, talented and dedicated group of people who strive to celebrate, promote and nurture Victoria's multiculturalism at every opportunity.

Most importantly, I would like to thank the community organisations, leaders, staff and volunteers, who continue to make an incredible difference in people's lives. Their inspirational and tireless work is the reason why our Victorian multicultural society is one of the most admired in the world.

Chairperson
Chin Tan

enhancing Victoria's cultural, religious and linguistic diversity

The Victorian Multicultural Commission (VMC) provides assistance to culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) Victorians and provides honest and candid advice to the Victorian Government. Operating since 1983, formally re-established by the *Multicultural Victoria Act 2004*, and strengthened under the *Multicultural Victoria Act 2011*, the Commission acts as a conduit between the Victorian community and the Victorian Government, and is first and foremost a voice for CALD communities. The VMC is committed to fostering goodwill and understanding between Victorians from all walks of life, languages, cultures and faiths. The VMC works towards creating a stable, harmonious and progressive society which embraces its diversity and is open to the world.

OUR ROLE

The VMC is the main link between Victoria's diverse communities and the Victorian Government. Its aim is to support and empower communities, promote unity and understanding, and celebrate Victoria's diversity. The Commission also provides independent advice to the Victorian Government to inform the development of legislative and policy frameworks, as well as the delivery of services to our multicultural society.

The Commission operates under the *Multicultural Victoria Act 2011*, which conveys the Victorian Government's commitment to recognise and support cultural, religious and linguistic diversity in Victoria and enhance the responsiveness and accountability of government departments in meeting the needs of all Victorians.

ABOUT THE MULTICULTURAL VICTORIA ACT 2011

The Multicultural Victoria Act 2011 (MV Act 2011) enshrines in legislation a preamble and a set of principles that recognise the state's cultural, religious and linguistic diversity as one of Victoria's greatest assets. It also recognises that one of the central tenets of multiculturalism is citizenship, and that the expression of citizenship is not limited to formal Australian citizenship, but incorporates the rights and responsibilities of all people in a multicultural society.

In broad terms, this legislation serves as a formal declaration of Victoria's commitment to diversity and community harmony. It commits all of us to work together to ensure a prosperous and united future in which diversity is respected and cultural heritage preserved, and where all individuals can access opportunities to participate in and contribute to the social, cultural, economic and political life of the State. This is within the overarching framework of abiding by the state's laws and respecting the democratic processes under which those laws are made.



Premier Gala Dinner Act
Photographer: Jorge de Araujo

MV Act 2011 Preamble

- 1) The Parliament recognises and values the cultural, religious, racial and linguistic diversity of the people of Victoria.
- 2) The Parliament further recognises that one of the central tenets of multiculturalism is citizenship and that the expression of citizenship is not limited to formal Australian citizenship, but refers to the rights and responsibilities of all people in a multicultural society.
- 3) The Parliament wishes to promote Victoria as a united community with shared laws, values, aspirations and responsibilities within which people from a diversity of backgrounds have—
 - a) the freedom and opportunity to preserve and express their cultural heritage; and
 - b) the freedom and opportunity to participate and contribute to the social, cultural, economic and political life of Victoria; and
 - c) equal rights and responsibilities under the laws of Victoria.

MV Act 2011 Principles of Multiculturalism

- 1) Parliament recognises that the people of Victoria are united in their shared commitment to—
 - a) a democratic framework governed by the rule of law; and
 - b) Victoria and Australia and the people, interests and future of Victoria and Australia.
- 2) Parliament further recognises that all Victorians come from diverse cultural, religious, racial and linguistic backgrounds and values the richness that such diversity brings to the Victorian community.
- 3) Parliament supports the rights and responsibilities of citizenship to which subsection (1) refers and promotes the diversity to which subsection (2) refers by recognising the following principles of multiculturalism—
 - a) all individuals in Victoria are entitled to mutual respect and understanding regardless of their diverse backgrounds;
 - b) all individuals and institutions in Victoria should promote and preserve diversity and cultural heritage within the context of shared laws, values, aspirations and responsibilities;
 - c) all individuals in Victoria (regardless of background) have shown that they can work together to build a positive and progressive future and this cooperation is to be encouraged so as to enhance Victoria as a great place in which to live;
 - d) all individuals in Victoria are equally entitled to access opportunities and participate in and contribute to the social, cultural, economic and political life of this State;
 - e) all individuals in Victoria have a responsibility to abide by the State's laws and respect the democratic processes under which those laws are made;
 - f) all individuals in Victoria should be united in a shared commitment to Australia and to community service;
 - g) all individuals and institutions should recognise Victoria's diversity as an asset and a valuable resource benefiting Australia.
- 4) Parliament further recognises that Victoria's diversity should be reflected in a whole-of-government approach to policy development, implementation and evaluation.

This Report provides a snapshot of the VMC's activities and achievements in the 2013-14 financial year within the context of its objectives and functions under the MV Act 2011.

VMC OBJECTIVES

As specified in the MV Act 2011, the VMC's objectives (section 7) are to:

- promote full participation by Victoria's diverse communities in the social, cultural, economic and political life of Victoria;
- promote access by Victoria's diverse communities to services made available by governments and other bodies;
- encourage all of Victoria's diverse communities to retain and express their social identity and cultural inheritance and to promote mutual respect;
- promote co-operation between bodies concerned with multicultural affairs and diversity;
- promote unity, understanding and harmony among Victoria's diverse communities;
- promote a better understanding of Victoria's diverse communities;
- promote interaction between individuals and communities from diverse backgrounds;
- promote the social, cultural and economic benefits of diversity;
- promote the rights and responsibilities of citizenship as a unifying force that strengthens our diverse multicultural community; and
- promote community service as a principle that builds a stronger society.

WHAT WE DO

As specified in the MV Act 2011, the VMC's functions (section 8) are to:

- ensure that the objectives of the Commission are met to the maximum extent that is practicable;
- research, report and advise the Minister on systemic community issues relating to the objectives of the Commission
 - that are identified by regional advisory councils or through other community consultation; or
 - that relate to the adequacy of government services, settlement support or service delivery for diverse communities;
- investigate, report and make recommendations to the Minister on any aspect of multicultural affairs referred to it by the Minister;
- advise the Minister on factors inhibiting the development of harmonious community relations and on barriers to the participation of Victoria's diverse communities in the social, cultural, economic and political life of Victoria;
- undertake systematic and wide-ranging consultation with bodies and people to
 - determine the needs of Victoria's diverse communities, including any needs covered by a report prepared by the Minister under section 28; and
 - promote the objectives of the Commission;
- develop and maintain partnerships between community organisations in providing assistance in settlement support and service delivery for diverse communities; and
- develop and maintain harmonious community relations between all relevant groups in the context of Victoria's diverse communities.



2013 Victorian Multicultural Excellence Awards
Photographer: Vicki Jones

OUR COMMISSIONERS

The VMC comprises 12 dedicated Commissioners, who advocate the values of the VMC and act as a conduit between the community and the Commission. Our Commissioners have a solid understanding of the issues facing ethnic communities and are actively involved in the community, regularly attending events and playing a vital role in assisting networks and liaison between different faith and community groups.

VMC Commissioners also promote the views of the community at a range of committees and forums at local, state and national level. The Commissioners are in constant contact with the Chairperson and meet regularly to develop strategies and discuss community issues that require action. Commissioners are selected through a competitive interview process and are then officially appointed by the Governor of Victoria for terms of up to four years. The Commissioners listed below were appointed on 1 September 2011 with the exception of the three new Commissioners Ms Safa Almarhoun, Ms Maryum Chaudry and Mr Abeselom Nega who were appointed on 31 August 2013. Commissioners Mr Spiro (Ross) Alatsas, Dr Teresa De Fazio, Mr Grahame J Leonard and Mr Chidambaram Srinivasan (Srini) were reappointed until 30 August 2017. The VMC farewelled three outgoing Commissioners Ms Yasmin Hassen, Mr Phillip Bain and Mr Yasser Soliman who completed their terms in 2013.

Commissioners

- Mr Chin Tan – Chairperson
- Mr Spiro (Ross) Alatsas – Deputy Chairperson
- Ms Safa Almarhoun – Youth Commissioner
- Ms Marion Lau OAM JP – Community Representative Commissioner
- Ms Maryum Chaudry

- Dr Teresa De Fazio
- Ms Elizabeth Drozd
- Mr Grahame J Leonard AM
- Mr Huseyin Mustafa
- Ms Jenny Matic
- Mr Abeselom Nega
- Mr Chidambaram Srinivasan (Srini)

The Commissioners meet regularly to discuss issues of importance to Victoria's CALD communities.

Commission meeting attendance from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014 is outlined below:

Commissioner number of meetings attended

Mr Chin Tan	8
Mr Spiro (Ross) Alatsas	6
Mr Phillip Bain (term ended 30/08/2013)	1
Ms Yasmin Hassen (term ended 30/08/13)	1
Ms Marion Lau OAM JP	8
Dr Teresa De Fazio	6
Ms Elizabeth Drozd	5
Mr Grahame J Leonard AM	7
Mr Huseyin (Huss) Mustafa	4
Mr Yasser Soliman (term ended 30/08/13)	1
Ms Jenny Matic	5
Mr Chidambaram Srinivasan (Srini)	6
Ms Safa Almarhoun	7
Ms Maryum Chaudry	7
Mr Abeselom Nega	6

During the reporting period, Commissioners continued to participate in community functions, consultations, events, conferences and seminars. In 2013-14, the Commissioners collectively attended approximately 686 community engagements.

OUR STAFF

During the year, dedicated VMC staff worked closely with the Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson and Commissioners to ensure that the VMC performed its legislative functions and achieved its core objectives. As at 30 June 2014 the Commission comprised of 8.2 FTE staff.

EXPENDITURE

Salaries and on costs	\$2,093,021
Operating expenses, including RACs	\$879,321
Sponsorship	\$150,000
TOTAL	\$3,122,342

advice to the Victorian Government and engaging with our communities

The VMC oversees eight Regional Advisory Councils (RACs) which provide advice on matters relating to the objectives and functions of the Commission. RAC members identify areas of systemic need as well as issues relevant to the multicultural communities within their respective geographic regions. Input from the RACs help the VMC ensure the changing needs of CALD communities are understood and responded to. The RACs also help ensure the VMC is properly informed when engaging with faith and community leaders, and the Victorian public.

REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCILS

The VMC uses information from RAC meetings to identify issues relevant to its functions, and to other government departments, agencies and service providers.

Three of the eight RACs are based in Melbourne and surrounds – Eastern Metropolitan, North and West Metropolitan, and Southern Metropolitan region. The remaining five are based in rural and regional Victoria – Barwon South West, Grampians, Loddon Mallee, Hume and Gippsland regions.

Each RAC is chaired by a VMC Commissioner and may have up to 13 other members, appointed for a two-year term, including:

- up to 10 community members who are local residents or representatives from service providers, community organisations or local business organisations; and
- up to three local government representatives.

RAC members are selected through a public Expression of Interest process. All RAC members are volunteers and are chosen for their involvement with multicultural communities in the region. Their knowledge of local multicultural affairs and citizenship issues, and their ability to raise issues and advocate on behalf of their region's multicultural communities are also contributing factors to their selection.

In April 2014, the VMC undertook a RAC member recruitment process and 18 new members were appointed. Current RAC members are appointed until February 2015.

As at 30 June 2014, there are 89 RAC members across Victoria, including Chairpersons. Thirteen members stood down or resigned during the 2013-14 period. A full list of 2013-14 RAC membership is at **Appendix 1**.

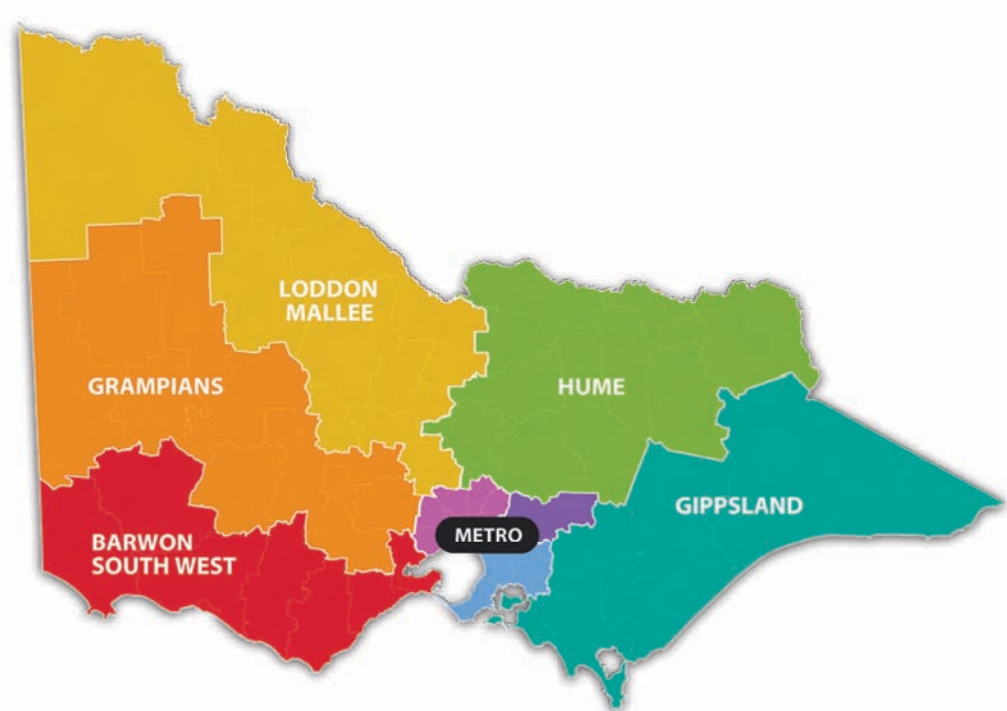
Each RAC meets up to three times a year at various locations in each region. During 2013-14, three rounds of meetings were held across each of the eight RAC regions.

Discussions focussed on multicultural and settlement priorities for each region including:

- access to education;
- housing and employment;
- health and aged care;
- translation and interpreting services;
- combating racism and discrimination; and
- promoting cultural diversity.

Input from RAC members informs the work of the VMC and its advice to the Victorian Government on the development of policy, legislation and the delivery of services. During 2013-14, 235 issues were raised by RAC members as impacting upon multicultural communities, and 103 action items were identified and completed.

RAC REGIONS



COMMUNITY CONSULTATIONS

Every year the VMC holds a series of Community Consultations throughout Victoria to seek feedback from Victoria's CALD communities. The Consultations are just one way the VMC fulfils its obligations under Section 8(e) of the *Multicultural Victoria Act 2011*.

In October and November 2013, the VMC held 15 Community Consultations throughout metropolitan Melbourne and across regional Victoria, including targeted consultations for women, youth, and peak bodies/service providers. The consultations were attended by over 630 people and represented a broad cross-section of the community.

The consultations gave members of the public, community groups and service providers the opportunity to provide feedback on local issues and needs of CALD communities and on the Victorian Government's progress in multicultural affairs.

The consultations also provided an opportunity for participants to hear about and understand the Victorian Government's approach and plans for multicultural Victoria, through presentations from the VMC and the Office of Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship (OMAC).

During the 2013 consultations, issues and concerns related to one or more of the following areas were consistently identified by people of varying ages, locations and stages of settling in Australia:

- finding and maintaining employment, and having secure housing;
- being able to access all available services, programs and opportunities – settlement specific and mainstream – without financial constraints, and at all life stages;
- being able to communicate, to be understood and to understand the laws, culture and norms of Australian society;
- keeping cultural traditions alive, and being respected and celebrated by the broader Victorian community;
- achieving educational goals, especially learning the English language; and
- being connected to a community and building community networks.

Issues raised in the consultations are responded to by the VMC or OMAC, or are referred to relevant Victorian Government or Federal Government departments. The VMC also uses the information and feedback from community consultations to inform its research program and other aspects of work.

The next round of community consultations will take place in late 2014.

RESEARCH AND INVESTIGATION

The VMC's research and advice is largely focussed on multicultural and settlement issues arising from community consultations, RACs and meetings with key stakeholders, as well as a wide range of general and specific interest groups from within the multicultural community.

The VMC's aim is to promote:

- culturally responsive services for Victoria's diverse communities;
- the full participation of diverse communities in Victorian life; and
- the social, and cultural and economic benefits of diversity.

In 2013-14, the VMC further developed its research program by identifying a series of research proposals that aim to build the capacity of government related services to meet the needs of CALD communities.

One of these projects, currently underway, is being undertaken in partnership with the Department of Human Services (DHS). The research will ultimately support DHS to improve services to CALD clients who come into contact with the child protection system.

The VMC also plays a key role in providing advice to the Victorian Government and other community, government and business stakeholders on multicultural affairs. This includes making submissions (for example, on proposed amendments to the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975*) and providing feedback to government and parliamentary inquiries on issues of concern to multicultural communities (for example, Victorian Auditor-General's Report May 2014, *Access to Services for Migrants, Refugees and Asylum Seekers*).

The VMC Chairperson, Commissioners, Director and senior management team participate in committees and reference groups including:

- Police and Community Multicultural Advisory Committee (PACMAC);
- Ministerial Advisory Council for a Multilingual and Multicultural Victoria;
- AFL Multicultural Strategy Roundtable and AFL Multicultural Focus groups;
- Asian Cup 2015 Steering Committee;
- Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission's Racial Hatred Project Reference Group;
- Department of Primary Industries' Senior Manager Multi-Agency Forum;
- Multi-faith Advisory Group; and
- Multicultural Services Delivery Inter-Departmental Group.



Dollard Akpabil

Photographer: Adam Trafford



in celebration and appreciation of our diversity

The VMC is committed to fostering awareness of the benefits that our rich cultural, linguistic and religious diversity brings to Victoria. We have a strong commitment to ensuring that cultural diversity remains one of our State's greatest assets.

In 2013-14 the VMC used its wide-reaching communication network to:

- promote mutual respect and understanding of diversity through campaigns and targeted activities;
- inform and connect multicultural communities, including developments in government that are relevant to multicultural affairs, via publications, online resources and media announcements; and
- celebrate Victoria's cultural, linguistic and religious diversity through a series of local and major events.

CULTURAL DIVERSITY WEEK

In 2014, Victorians celebrated the twelfth annual Cultural Diversity Week (CDW) from 15 to 23 March, with a range of activities held across the State. The annual program – the largest of its kind in

Victoria – is organised by the VMC and encourages the participation of all Victorians in recognising and celebrating the many benefits that cultural and linguistic diversity delivers.

CDW also marks the United Nations International Day for the Elimination of Racism on 21 March, which reaffirms our belief in the right of all Victorians to live freely, without fear of discrimination and vilification.

In 2014, the VMC supported around 300 community CDW activities, which took place in metropolitan, regional and rural areas. A number of these events were supported through funding from the VMC's Community Grants Program. The VMC also provided free promotional and marketing materials to assist organisers to promote their events, ensuring that the messages of CDW were spread to the broadest possible audience.

Pictured above: Premier Gala Dinner 2014 by Jorge de Araujo

The VMC holds two flagship events during CDW: the Premier's Gala Dinner and the Viva Victoria Multicultural Festival. Both events provide the chance for the Victorian Government to affirm its commitment to supporting Victoria's diverse communities. The two events also create the opportunity for members of those communities to share and celebrate their cultures with the broader public.

The Premier's Gala Dinner was held at Crown Entertainment Complex on Saturday 15 March 2014. It attracted close to 1,500 guests, representing varied sectors including government, service providers, business and community groups. Guests enjoyed an evening of fine food and networking, and an exciting floor show featuring entertainment from 15 performance groups representing diverse cultures and genres.

The free public Viva Victoria Multicultural Festival was held at Federation Square on Sunday 23 March 2014. The Festival featured over 300 music and dance artists performing on five stages, as well as cultural displays, art exhibitions, sports clinics, children's activities, food, art and craft. Viva Victoria was attended by over 43,500 people representing many walks of life and cultural backgrounds, making it one of Melbourne's premier cultural events.

The VMC provides a range of free CDW resources for teachers, which are developed in consultation with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. The CDW Teachers' Resource Kit provides primary and secondary school teachers with inspiration for excursions, activities and lesson planning, focussing on the themes of the week. It also provides a detailed list of text, online and video resources.

The VMC also holds an Art Competition for primary school students. In 2014, around 200 fantastic entries

were submitted in the Competition, which was themed "Celebrating Cultural Diversity." Finalists were recognised, and winners announced, by Matthew Guy MLC, Minister for Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship, at a presentation ceremony and exhibition held during the Viva Victoria Multicultural Festival.

AWARDS AND INITIATIVES

Victoria's Multicultural Awards for Excellence

Victoria's Multicultural Awards for Excellence was established by the VMC in 2002 to recognise and reward the contribution of individuals and organisations in the promotion of Victoria's multicultural harmony and services.

In 2013, the VMC received over 200 nominations across the 10 Award categories. One hundred recipients were presented with Awards at a formal ceremony held at Government House on 4 December 2013. A full list of the 2013 recipients of Victoria's Multicultural Awards for Excellence is at Appendix 2.

PRINT AND ONLINE COMMUNICATION

Print

The VMC produces a range of print publications each year, including:

- Annual Report;
- *MV Magazine*;
- Viva Victoria Festival Program;
- Cultural Diversity Week Teachers' Resource Kit;
- Cultural Diversity Week Sponsor Report; and
- Victoria's Multicultural Awards for Excellence guidelines, nomination forms and award recipient booklet.

Many of these publications are available to view or download from the VMC website www.multicultural.vic.gov.au



LEFT TO RIGHT VMC Publications: Annual Report 2012-13, *MV Magazine*, June, March and October.

Online

The VMC website (www.multicultural.vic.gov.au) continues to be an important communications resource, providing regular news and updates for community groups, as well as advertising community and government events and activities with a multicultural focus.

The website comprises six sections:

- About Us – information about legislation, VMC, OMAC, the Minister, Commissioners, and Whole-of-Government approaches;
- Grants – information on how to apply for funding;
- Population and Migration – statistical information about Victoria;
- Events and Initiatives – information about VMC and OMAC projects and a calendar of multicultural events;
- Regional Advisory Councils – including a login area for RAC members; and
- Resources – publications, media releases, articles, research, and a searchable community directory facility.

E-newsletter

The VMC delivers a fortnightly e-newsletter, *VMC Update*, to over 2,500 email subscribers.

It provides information on news within the multicultural community, upcoming events, plus Government and community-based projects and programs. Previous issues of *VMC Update* can be accessed on the VMC website: www.multicultural.vic.gov.au

Social Media

The VMC uses social media channels to communicate with multicultural communities and stakeholders.

These social media tools include:

- Facebook – www.facebook.com/multiculturevic
- Twitter – www.twitter.com/multiculturevic

The number of ‘likes’ and followers these social media channels have attracted continues to increase, offering new levels of interaction and information sharing between the VMC and its many stakeholders and communities.



Viva Festival Act

Photographer: Jorge de Araujo



Viva Festival
Photographer: Photoeventz

supporting Victoria's multicultural community groups and organisations

The VMC recognises the important role that Victoria's culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse clubs and organisations play in strengthening and enhancing Victoria's multicultural community. The VMC supports this role through the Community Grants Program, which in 2013-14 provided 2,300 grants totalling \$5.55 million. With the addition of the Chairperson Sponsorship Program, some \$5.7 million was provided by the VMC across the financial year.

Community Grants Program funding is highly sought after, with 2,700 applications seeking over \$11 million received by the VMC in 2013-14.

The VMC Community Grants Program comprises:

- Strengthening Multicultural Communities — supporting community organisations to undertake projects that address the unmet needs of Victoria's culturally and linguistically diverse communities;
- Organisational Support – providing assistance with the cost of running a community organisation;
- Seniors Citizens Organisational Support – providing assistance to multicultural community organisations that have a majority of members over 60 years of age. These grants are supplemented by a free public liability insurance program;
- Multicultural Festivals and Events – these grants open twice a year to fund events and festivals in the following six months. Round Two has a focus on events held in association with Cultural Diversity Week, with some funds provided by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) to support schools in participating in the celebrations;
- Community Language School Program – assisting new and existing community language schools with their running costs. This program is jointly funded with the DEECD;
- Multifaith Initiatives and Interfaith Networks – supporting interfaith activities which engage different faith groups as well as the wider community; and
- Building and Facilities Improvement – funding essential repairs and small improvements for community owned buildings.

GRANTS FUNDING

The Community Grants Program is an important part of the Victorian Government's efforts to support our multicultural community and to increase understanding and respect across cultures, faiths and generations. The following are just a few examples of the 2,300 events, organisations and projects funded through this program.

Multicultural Festivals and Events

The Festivals and Events category was allocated a total of \$1.67 million in 2013-14 through two rounds. Round Two has a priority on supporting activities associated with Cultural Diversity Week, held every March.

Roxburgh Rise Primary School

Cultural Diversity Week was celebrated with a range of cultural activities including a Multicultural Food Day, a Harmony Day concert, cooking demonstrations, showcase of traditional arts and crafts, classroom activities to foster intercultural awareness, and activities organised by parents to promote awareness and understanding of cultural diversity.

Australian Association For Indian Culture and Education (AAICE) Inc.

AAICE Inc. took "Diwali - The Festival of Lights" to the Ballarat Showgrounds to celebrate and share Indian culture and more broadly, cultural diversity. Over 700 people participated in live Bollywood music performances by local Victorian artists, authentic Indian delicacies and sweets as well as a range of cultural performances by local Ballarat artists.

Organisational Support and Senior Citizens Organisational Support

The Community Grants Program provides funds to nearly 900 Seniors groups and over 300 other multicultural organisations to assist in meeting the day to day running costs and regular activities of their organisations.

**Australian Assyrian Arts and Literature Foundation
– Seniors Group**

The Australian Assyrian Arts and Literature Foundation organised a number of recreational day trips for senior citizens within the Assyrian community. Although these activities were open to members, they also sought to engage non-members who are senior citizens to ensure an inclusive approach.

**Australian Fuzzy Wuzzy
Papua New Guinean Foundation**

The Australian Fuzzy Wuzzy Papua New Guinean Foundation uses VMC funding towards the costs of essential services and general costs associated with running the organisation. This includes administrative costs, professional bodies membership costs, utilities bills, office equipment and rental bonds.

Strengthening Multicultural Communities

The Strengthening Multicultural Communities category provided over \$850,000 to assist 130 community organisations in running 12 month projects to address unmet needs within the multicultural community.

African Women’s Network South East (AWNSE)

AWNSE is developing a program of activities that will provide opportunities to isolated African women and their families to come together to develop new skills, socialise, increase peer support networks and connectedness to the wider community. The aim is to promote physical, mental and social-well-being through sharing of information, skills and accessing affordable community resources and services to address a range of issues including isolation and emotional stress.

Resilient Aspiring Women (RAW) Inc.

RAW ran a series of major workshops seeking to empower women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. The workshops had guest speakers on health and nutrition, storytelling, traditional costume, sustainable living and permaculture gardening. Monthly smaller workshops including traditional cooking classes with other cultural sharing including storytelling, national costumes were also provided. The project also ran a homework club and health education sessions for youth.



Guests enjoying Viva Festival
Photographer: Jorge de Araujo

appendix 1

REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

EASTERN METROPOLITAN	Rick Nugent	Chairperson: Dr Teresa De Fazio
Chairperson: Huss Mustafa	Samli Ozturk	Community Representatives
Community Representatives	Walter Villagonzalo	Viviana Golding
Abhishek Prasad	Deepak Vinayak	Andrew Alexander
Tony Chen	Local Government Representatives	Helen Flanders
Albert Fatileh	Mary Lalios	Michael Martinez
Chandani Kuruppu	Arden Joseph	Sally Trigg
Tina Stathopoulos	Kath Brackett	Florio Skratulja
Umit Ugur	HUME	Milovan Arandjelovic
Bright Chinganya	Chairperson: Chidambaram Srinivasan	Local Government Representatives
Mohamed Mohideen	Community Representatives	Samantha Sharp
Local Government Representatives	Eugenie Barima	Eddy Kontelj
Joe Cossari	Barbara Brown	Gary Thompson
Maria McCarthy	Maria Calandro	LODDON MALLEE
SOUTHERN METROPOLITAN	Apollo Nsubuga-Kyobe	Chairpersons: Abeselom Nega and Maryum Chaudry
Chairperson: Grahame Leonard	Local Government Representatives	Community Representatives
Birgit Goetz	Kaye Thomson	Peter Byrne
Kalyan Ky	Charlene Norton	Nick Cavallo
Rampal Reddy Muthyala	Charles Halter	Noemi Cummings
Sam Navarria	GRAMPIANS	Susan Denny
Iman Rimam	Chairperson: Chin Tan	Dolly Gerges
Menachem Vorchheimer	Community Representatives	Mary Ruane-St.Clair
Sarah Williams	Gaynor Atkin	Sudesh Tiwari
Zuben Rustomjee	Vivian Bradbury	Local Government Representatives
Eric Cheng	Dimitri Dollard	Kaye Graves
Local Government Representatives	Mona Hatwal	GIPPSLAND
Penny Pavlou	Joshua Morris	Chairperson: Elizabeth Drozd
Claude Ullin	Sundram Sivamalai	Community Representatives
NORTH AND WEST METROPOLITAN	Sujatha Umakanthan	Ali Khan
Chairperson: Jenny Matic	Frank Williams	Anna Hall
Community Representatives	Norman Prueter	Sandy Kam
Chandra Bamunusinghe	Meeta Narsi	Soula Kanellopoulos
Ivan Chan	Barry Petrovski	Christine Lee
Anne Cox	Local Government Representatives	J. Murray
Mohammed El-leissy	Frances Salenga	Lisa Sinha
Diana Krause	Anne Champness	Tori Stratford
Afshan Mantoo	BARWON SOUTH WEST	

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VICTORIA'S MULTICULTURAL AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE RECIPIENT LIST 2013

PREMIER'S AWARD FOR COMMUNITY HARMONY	Mrs Anna Nicola	Mr Arthur Karaviotis
Mr Frank Di Blasi	Mr Nellie Nikoloudis	Ms Jenny Penfold
MERITORIOUS SERVICE IN THE COMMUNITY	Mr Marian Pawlik	Mrs Narmatha Ravichandhira
Mr Francis Acquah	Mr Gennaro Petrucelli	Ms Dalal Samaan
Mr Abdulhakim Adus	Mr An Cong Pham	AMBASSADOR
Ms Sefika Altintas	Ms Nalini Pulaparti	Mr Ahmed Dini
Mr Antonio Bentincontri	Mr Giovanni Randello	POLICE AND COMMUNITY MULTICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE AWARDS
Mr Frank Cheng	Mrs Maria Rosochodska	Sergeant Joseph Herrech – Multicultural Award
Mr Chris Christodoulou	Dr Sunila Shrivastava	Leading Senior Constable Nektarios Parisis – Multicultural Award
Ms Antonietta Cozzo	Mrs Maria Sidur	Senior Constable Ash Dixit – Multicultural Media Award
Ms Erminia Del Papa	Mrs Maria Sotriou	Constable Margaret Anderson – Probationary Constable Multicultural Award
Mr Michele Delle Vergine	Mr Vasana Srinivasan	Mr Harminder Singh – Protective Service Officer
Mrs Rajeh Dib	Mr J. R. (Fei) Teng	Mr Mohammed Shabbir Alam – Probationary Protective Service Officer
Mr Giuseppe Ferlauto	Mr Vi Minh Tran	MR NADEEM HUSSAIN – COMMUNITY EXEMPLAR AWARD
Ms Simon Grilj	Mr Ivan Valencic	HONOUR ROLL
Mrs Pandelis Hatzipantelis	Mrs Maria Vlachodimitropoulos	Mr Tha Wah
Mr Binh Huynh	Ms Jane Volkov	MEDIA
Mr Giuseppe Iannantuono	Mr Van Hoa Vuong	Ms Manpreet Kaur Singh
Dr Sivakumaran Kathiravelu. P	Mr William Wai	
Mrs Jessiie Kaur-Singh	Mr Mark Wang	
Dr Alexis Keskevich	Mr Ranjith Wickramasinghe	
Dr Marina Keskevich	Mrs Elizabeth Williams	
Mr David Kong	Mr Neil Yip	
Ms Theodora Koufopoulos	Mrs Romana Zetko	
Mrs Emilia Kubic	SERVICE DELIVERY TO MULTICULTURAL VICTORIA	
Mr Zbigniew Leman	Mr Rasiah Balasri	
Mr Jog Limbu	Mrs Jing Cheng	
Mr Jin Xin Ma	Mr Sisay Dinku	
Mrs Marija Maljanek	Ms Doris Frank	
Mrs Etelka Mihaljevic	Mrs Arhet Geberat	
Mr Mohamed Shums Dean Mohamed	Ms Eugenia Grammatikakis	
Mrs Teresa Muto	Ms Linda Huang	
Mrs Sulochana Naidu	Mrs Joy Juma	

ORGANISATION AWARDS

MERITORIOUS SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY

Australian Croatian Community Service

Chabad Youth

Federation of Indian Women's Associations in Australia

Nepalese Association of Victoria Inc

Singh Saba Sports Club Inc

THE-HE Vietnamese Language Centre

Yeti Soccer Club Inc

SERVICE DELIVERY TO MULTICULTURAL VICTORIA

AMES: Multicultural Hub

Australian Polish Benevolent Association Inc

Celebrate India Inc

Chinese Fellowship of Victoria: Chinese School

Croatian Cultural Artistic Association: H.K.U.D. Lado, Geelong

JET Australia Foundation

Jewish Aid Australia

The Salvation Army: The Couch

Yuvatha

BUSINESS AWARD – CORPORATE INNOVATION

Gouge Linen and Garment Services

BUSINESS AWARD – MARKETING

Language Partner trading as eTranslate

EDUCATION

B'nai B'rith Courage to Care (Vic) Inc

Lyndhurst Secondary College: Multipride

Yarra Primary School

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

City of Ballarat

AMBASSADOR

Africa Day Australia

Level 3, 3 Treasury Place, Melbourne, Victoria 3002
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