



# Victorian Multicultural Commission Annual Report 2014-15

*Enhancing Victoria's cultural, religious and linguistic diversity.*





Front cover: International Language and Culture Festival.  
Photographer: Jorge de Araujo.

## **ANNUAL REPORT 2014-15**

The 2014-15 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](http://www.multicultural.vic.gov.au)**

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

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14 *communications and events*



18 *grants and sponsorships*

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*Premier's Gala Dinner 2015*

Photographer: Jorge de Araujo



The Hon. Robin Scott MP  
Minister for Multicultural Affairs  
Minister for Finance  
1 Macarthur Street  
East Melbourne VIC 3002

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 2014 to 30 June 2015.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ross Alatsas". The signature is stylized with loops and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Ross Alatsas  
Acting Chairperson

# strengthening our community



Over the past year, the Victorian Multicultural Commission has continued to support culturally and linguistically diverse communities through a dynamic program of consultations, research, grants, awards, communications and events.

I am pleased to report on the Commission's progress in promoting social harmony across the state and reaching out into the community to better understand the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse Victorians.

At the heart of our community focused work lies a series of consultations and the facilitation of Regional Advisory Councils. These each play a key role in identifying issues facing multicultural communities and inform the Commission's research program and subsequent recommendations to the Victorian Government.

In 2014-15, 21 consultations were held with core community groups including young people, women and service providers. By facilitating these targeted forums, we were able to provide participants with a safe, open and inclusive opportunity to explore issues and share ideas for solutions. We also undertook extensive consultations in the Mildura area to understand local issues, and commissioned La Trobe University to complete a research report exploring social cohesion in the area.

Valuable contributions were made to state and national initiatives addressing the needs of multicultural communities. This included a submission to the Royal Commission into Family Violence regarding the experiences of women and their children from culturally diverse backgrounds in Victoria, and a report to the Department of Health and Human Services regarding improved data collection on children in culturally diverse communities.

We supported hundreds of community organisations through our Community Grants Program. A total of \$5.74 million was awarded through 2,500 grants across seven categories, signifying the strength of our multicultural community and the numerous projects, festivals and initiatives being run at a local level across the state.

In September 2014, outstanding Victorians were honoured for their inspiring work to promote social harmony in Victoria's Multicultural Awards for Excellence. The highly regarded annual awards recognised 73 individuals and 17 organisations representing 24 different multicultural communities across various sectors of the community including education, local government, policing, business and media. These awards not only acknowledge the remarkable achievements made by Victorians in support of our multicultural society, they also celebrate and promote the many benefits cultural diversity brings to Victoria.

Cultural Diversity Week, held in March 2015, proved once again to be a highlight on Victoria's events calendar with a record 349 community events held across the state. The Commission's flagship events were particularly popular, with more than 1,400 guests enjoying a variety of multicultural musical acts at the Premier's Gala Dinner, and a record crowd of more than 45,000 people soaking up the festival sights and sounds of Viva Victoria at Federation Square where more than 340 artists performed.



With its unique and special energy, the week brings people together from Victoria's many diverse communities to celebrate and embrace each other's cultural heritage. I thank everyone who was involved in the week, particularly our sponsors, without whom the week would not be possible.

On behalf of the Commission, I would like to thank the Minister for Multicultural Affairs, The Hon. Robin Scott MP, for his vision, encouragement and ongoing support of the Commission and our culturally diverse state. I also thank his predecessor, The Hon Matthew Guy MLC for his support and commitment.

I congratulate my fellow Commissioners, management and staff for their hard work and dedication over the past year. Their individual and collective efforts demonstrate an undeniable passion and enthusiasm for supporting Victorians from all walks of life, and it has been an absolute pleasure to work by their side.

I also wish to acknowledge and thank Chin Tan, who served as the Commission's Chairperson from 1 September 2011 until 10 April 2015. Mr Tan was widely regarded for his active involvement and support of multicultural communities.

In 2015-16, the Commission welcomes a new Chairperson, Ms Helen Kapalos. Like many people across community groups and the Victorian Government, I am delighted by Ms Kapalos' appointment and know her leadership and expertise will be warmly embraced.

It has been an honour to serve as Acting Chairperson, and I look forward to supporting Ms Kapalos in the years ahead as I resume my role as Deputy Chairperson.

**Ross Alatsas**

Acting Chairperson (11 April – 16 August 2015)

Pictured above: Students at the International Language and Culture Festival. Photographer: Jorge de Araujo.

# supporting and assisting culturally and linguistically diverse Victorians

The Victorian Multicultural Commission (VMC) is an independent statutory authority dedicated to providing assistance to culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities, and to promoting social harmony for the benefit of all Victorians.

## OUR ROLE

Acting as a conduit between CALD communities and the Victorian Government, the VMC provides independent advice to the government to inform the development of legislative and policy frameworks, as well as the delivery of services to our multicultural society. By providing these communities with a voice, the VMC fosters goodwill and understanding throughout the state, and encourages all Victorians to embrace cultural diversity.

The VMC began operations in 1983, and was formally re-established by the *Multicultural Victoria Act 2004*, and strengthened under the *Multicultural Victoria Act 2011*.

*The Act* conveys the Victorian Government's commitment to recognising and supporting cultural, religious and linguistic diversity in Victoria, and to enhancing the responsiveness and accountability of government departments in meeting the needs of all Victorians.

## 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. The MV Act 2011 operates within the overarching framework of abiding by the state's laws and respecting the democratic processes under which those laws are made.





*Viva Victoria multicultural festival 2015*

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 2014-2015 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.

### **VMC functions**

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, MV Act 2011; 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.

## OUR COMMISSIONERS

The VMC is led by 12 Commissioners who advocate the values of the VMC and work directly with the community. Our Commissioners are dedicated Victorians who are actively involved in the community and have a strong understanding of the issues facing CALD communities. They regularly attend community events and play a vital role in facilitating collaboration and links across networks and between different faith and community groups.

VMC Commissioners also support and promote community views at a range of committees and forums at local, state and national levels. 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 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 were reappointed until 30 August 2017. The VMC farewelled two outgoing Commissioners, Ms Maryum Chaudry, who resigned in March 2015, and Mr Chin Tan, former Chairperson who resigned in April 2015.

## Commissioners

- Mr Ross (Spiro) Alatsas - Acting Chairperson
- Mr Chin Tan (former Chairperson, resigned April 2015)
- Miss Safa Almarhoun - Youth Commissioner
- Ms Maryum Chaudry
- Dr Teresa De Fazio
- Ms Elizabeth Drozd
- Ms Marion Lau - Community Representative Commissioner
- Mr Grahame J Leonard
- Ms Jenny Matic
- Mr Huseyin Mustafa
- Mr Abeselom Nega
- Mr Chidambaram Srinivasan

The Commissioners meet regularly to discuss issues of importance to Victoria's CALD communities. Commission meeting attendance from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015 is outlined below:

## Number of meetings attended by VMC Commissioners

Commissioner	Total
Mr Chin Tan (resigned 10/4/2015)	4
Mr Ross (Spiro) Alatsas	5
Mr Abeselom Nega	6
Dr Teresa De Fazio	6
Ms Elizabeth Drozd	3
Ms Safa Almarhoun	6
Ms Marion Lau OAM JP	5
Mr Grahame Leonard AM	4
Ms Jenny Matic	3
Mr Huss (Huseyin) Mustafa	4
Ms Maryum Chaudry (resigned 6/3/15)	1
Mr Chidambaram Srinivasan (Sri)	6

## 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 2015 the Commission comprised of 13.4 FTE staff.

## EXPENDITURE

Salaries and on costs	\$1,807,298
Operating expenses, including RACS	\$867,836
Sponsorship	\$234,685
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,909,819</b>

# engaging with CALD communities and advising the Victorian Government

The VMC oversees eight Regional Advisory Councils and facilitates community consultations across Victoria to identify issues facing multicultural communities and to ensure their changing needs are met.

## REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCILS

The Regional Advisory Councils (RACs) provide valuable information regarding the changing needs of CALD communities in Victoria which informs the VMC's advice to the Victorian Government on the development of policy, legislation and the delivery of services to these communities. The RACs also provide advice on matters relating to the objectives and functions of the VMC, and help ensure the VMC is properly informed when engaging with faith and community leaders, and the Victorian public.

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. By localising the RACs, the VMC is able to gain a regional perspective on particular issues.

Each RAC is chaired by a VMC Commissioner and may have up to 13 other members, who are appointed for a two-year term. The RACs include:

- 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.

In early 2015, the VMC completed an extensive recruitment process for 104 member positions for the eight RACs. The new members were approved by the VMC Chairperson in March 2015. As at 30 June 2015, there were 93 RAC members across Victoria, including Chairpersons. A full list of RAC members and RAC chairpersons is at Appendix 1.

Each RAC meets up to three times a year at various locations in each region. During 2014-15, three rounds of meetings were held across each of the eight RAC regions. Discussions focused on multicultural and settlement priorities for each region, including:

- Employment
- Social cohesion including youth engagement
- Access/coordination of services
- Family violence
- Mental health
- Aged care
- Education
- New and emerging systemic issues

During 2014/15, 424 issues were raised by RAC members as impacting upon multicultural communities, and 32 action items were identified and completed.

## RAC REGIONS



## COMMUNITY CONSULTATIONS

Every year, the VMC holds a series of community consultations to seek feedback from community groups, members of the public, and service providers on issues affecting Victoria's culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

Issues raised in the consultations are responded to by the VMC or the Office for Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship, or referred to other 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.

These consultations are just one example of how the VMC fulfills its obligations under Section 8(e) of the *Multicultural Victoria Act 2011*.

In 2014-15, community consultations were held in metropolitan and regional areas of Victoria. A series of seven consultations were held with young people, and six forums were held exclusively for women. Another three forums were held with more than 30 different service providers. The VMC also undertook extensive consultations in the Mildura area. People unable to attend the consultations were invited to make written submissions to the VMC.

### Mildura

In December 2014, VMC representatives met with a range of community groups in Mildura to discuss local issues and wider social and economic issues affecting CALD communities. This included the Mayor of Mildura, representatives from Victoria Police, Mildura City Council, the Sunraysia Mallee

Ethnic Communities Council, the Northern Mallee Learning and Employment network, members of the Mildura Islamic community, and an Afghani small business operator. The VMC also met with staff and students at the Trade Training Centre, the Mildura English Language Centre and Chaffey Secondary College.

Participants expressed their appreciation to the VMC for travelling to Mildura to directly engage with them on local concerns and issues. The visit was also positively reported in regional media.

### Young people

The VMC conducted a total of 10 consultations with young people, with seven in metropolitan Melbourne and three in regional Victoria at Morwell, Ballarat and Shepparton. Six of the forums were conducted in collaboration with staff from the Centre for Multicultural Youth. Two forums were held exclusively for young females, and two were conducted in conjunction with the Islamic Council of Victoria specifically for Muslim young people. The final forum in Frankston was for young people of all communities.

The major theme of the forums was 'Engaging Our Youth, Our Future'. Participants provided a wide range of views and insightful recommendations to key issues affecting them including:

- Employment
- Discrimination and bias
- Leadership and advocacy
- Marginalisation and belonging.

Forum participants shared their appreciation to the VMC for giving them an opportunity to voice their concerns and opinions in an open and safe way.



*Viva Victoria multicultural festival 2015*

Photographer: Jorge de Araujo

## Women

The VMC conducted a total of eight forums for women, with six in metropolitan areas of Melbourne and two regional forums in Geelong and Bendigo. The major theme of the forums was 'Women's Voices Guiding Our Future'.

Women from more than 20 diverse cultural backgrounds and different stages of settlement provided a range of views and insightful recommendations regarding key issues affecting them. Feedback indicated that participants found the forums empowering by increasing their knowledge of issues and giving them the confidence to raise their concerns in a caring environment. Issues raised by participants included:

- Employment
- Access to services
- Discrimination and bias
- Leadership and advocacy.

## Service providers

During the year, the VMC conducted three consultations with service providers themed 'Meeting Community Needs' in Melbourne, Geelong and Bendigo. More than 30 organisations who provide a broad range of services to CALD communities participated in the forums and shared their experiences, insights and recommendations for addressing key issues affecting their clients. Participants appreciated the opportunity to provide advice to the VMC, and found the forums extremely informative by helping to increase their understanding of the range and complexity of issues affecting CALD communities. Key issues covered in the forums included:

- Service provider organisation
- Service provider clients
- Family Violence
- Discrimination and Bias

Information from the service provider forums was used to inform the VMC's submission to the Royal Commission into Family Violence.

## Community Consultation Reports

The VMC will produce reports on these community consultations outlining findings and recommendations. The reports will be available in October 2015. The next round of community consultations will take place in early 2016.

## RESEARCH

A key function of the VMC under the *Multicultural Victoria Act 2011* is to conduct research into key issues facing culturally diverse communities. In 2014-15, the VMC focused its research, reporting and advice around three key areas: social cohesion in Shepparton Mildura, child protection, and family violence.

### Child Protection CALD Data, 2014

The VMC commissioned research to identify options for improved CALD data collection following the *2012 Report of Protecting Victoria's Vulnerable Child Inquiry*.

A copy of the report has been provided to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). The VMC will continue to consult with DHHS regarding implementation of the report's recommendations.

### Understanding Social Cohesion in Shepparton Mildura

La Trobe University has been commissioned to complete a research project exploring social cohesion in Shepparton and Mildura. Understanding Social Cohesion in Shepparton and Mildura will investigate a wide range of issues affecting the multicultural composition and social cohesion and of Victorian communities.

The research is intended to identify the key success factors involved in integrating multicultural populations into the Shepparton and Mildura communities, and explore whether these social cohesion success factors can be transferred, replicated or adapted to other areas throughout Victoria.

A report on the research and its findings and recommendations is scheduled to be published in October 2015.

### Royal Commission into Family Violence

The VMC made a submission to the Royal Commission into Family Violence regarding the experiences of women and their children from CALD backgrounds in Victoria.

The submission addresses Terms of Reference: Item 6 – addressing the needs and experiences of people affected by family violence with particular regard to people from CALD communities, and provides responses to questions 17-19 of the Royal Commission's Issues Paper.

The submission was informed by extensive research of existing literature and consultations with women from CALD backgrounds, community representatives, peak bodies and service providers throughout Victoria. A range of issues were raised in the submission including the barriers that disproportionately affect CALD women and their children such as a lack of culturally-appropriate support services, social isolation, cultural and language barriers and the subjective threshold of disclosing family violence.

A copy of the submission is available at [www.multicultural.vic.gov.au](http://www.multicultural.vic.gov.au)

# celebrating Victoria's cultural diversity and promoting social harmony

Cultural diversity is one of Victoria's greatest assets. The VMC celebrates and promotes cultural diversity and social harmony through a program of events and communications.

## **CULTURAL DIVERSITY WEEK**

**14-22 March 2015**

Cultural Diversity Week (CDW) is the biggest multicultural celebration in the state, bringing together Victorians from all walks of life to celebrate the many cultures that make our community so vibrant. Importantly, the week provides all Victorians with an opportunity to share their cultural heritage and foster mutual respect and understanding in the community.

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 2015, the week was celebrated for the 13th year, and included a record 349 community events across the state. 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.

Highlights of the week included the Premier's Gala Dinner and the Viva Victoria Multicultural Festival. These events demonstrate the Victorian Government's commitment to supporting Victoria's diverse communities, and provide an opportunity for members of those communities to share and celebrate their cultures with the broader Victorian public.

More than 1,400 guests attended the Premier's Gala Dinner at the Crown Palladium on Saturday 14 March 2015. The guest list included representatives from across the Victorian community including government, service providers, business and community groups. Fine food, networking and cultural performances representing all corners of the globe helped create a memorable evening.

The free, family friendly Viva Victoria Multicultural Festival at Federation Square was attended by more than 45,000 people on Sunday 22 March 2015. The festival featured over 340 music and dance artists performing on five stages, as well as cultural displays, art exhibitions, sports clinics, children's activities, language workshops, food, art and craft.





To support the week and extend our reach, 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. It also provides a detailed list of text, online and video resources.

The VMC also holds an art competition for primary school students to encourage the younger members of Victoria to participate in the CDW celebrations and engage with Victoria's cultural diversity.

In 2015, the Primary School Art Competition was themed 'Strengthening Our Community', and involved more than 30 schools who submitted over 400 entries. The 16 finalists and winners of each of three categories were announced by The Hon. Robin Scott MP, Minister for Multicultural Affairs, at a special presentation ceremony and exhibition held during the Viva Victoria Multicultural Festival.

Pictured right: The Hon. Robin Scott MP, Minister for Multicultural Affairs presents to Cultural Diversity Week Primary School Art Competition Finalist Hana Khadir.

Photographer: Jorge de Araujo.



Pictured above: Viva Victoria multicultural festival 2015. Photographer: Jorge de Araujo.

## COMMUNICATIONS

### Print

In 2014-15, the VMC produced a range of print publications including:

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

Many of these publications are available to view or download from the VMC website [www.multicultural.vic.gov.au](http://www.multicultural.vic.gov.au)

### Website

The VMC website ([www.multicultural.vic.gov.au](http://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 seven sections:

- Home page – overview of news, stories and events.
- 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.
- Resources – publications, media releases, articles, research, and a searchable community directory facility.

### E-newsletter

Each fortnight, the VMC produces the VMC Update, an e-newsletter to promote news within the multicultural community, upcoming events, plus government and community-based projects and programs to more than 3,000 subscribers.

Previous issues of VMC Update can be accessed on the VMC website [www.multicultural.vic.gov.au](http://www.multicultural.vic.gov.au)

### Social Media

Social media channels are used on a daily basis to communicate with multicultural communities and stakeholders. The VMC's followers continue to grow each week, providing valuable opportunities to interact and engage with the community. Connect with us on:

- Facebook – [www.facebook.com/multiculturevic](http://www.facebook.com/multiculturevic)
- Twitter – [www.twitter.com/multiculturevic](http://www.twitter.com/multiculturevic)

## AWARDS

### Victoria's Multicultural Awards for Excellence

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

To reflect the breadth of work undertaken across our state, the awards were presented in the following 10 categories:

- Victorian Multicultural Honour Roll
- Award for Meritorious Service to the Community
- Award for Service Delivery to Multicultural Victoria
- Premier's Award for Community Harmony
- Victorian Multicultural Business Awards:
  - Corporate Innovation Award
  - Victorian Multicultural Marketing Award
- Ambassador Award
- Education and Early Childhood Award
- Local Government Award
- Media Award
- Victoria Police Multicultural Awards:
  - Police Annual Multicultural Award
  - Police Multicultural Media Award
  - Protective Service Officer Multicultural Award
  - Police Community Exemplary Award

In 2014, the VMC received 160 nominations. A total of 73 individuals and 17 organisations received awards at a formal ceremony held at Government House on 22 September 2014. A full list of the 2014 recipients of Victoria's Multicultural Awards for Excellence is at Appendix 2.

Pictured left: VMC Commissioners Elizabeth Drozd (left) and Grahame Leonard AM (centre) with awards recipients. Photographer: Jorge de Araujo.





*Premier's Gala Dinner 2015*

Photographer: Jorge de Araujo

# supporting Victoria's multicultural organisations

Victoria's culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse organisations and clubs play an important role in strengthening and enhancing Victoria's multicultural community. In recognition of their contribution, the VMC provides funding support through its Community Grants Program.

## COMMUNITY GRANTS PROGRAM

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.

In 2014-15, the VMC provided a total of \$5.74 million in funding to community organisations through 2,500 grants. With the addition of the Chairperson Sponsorship Program, more than \$5.9 million was distributed during the financial year.

The highly sought after grants attracted 3,200 applications seeking more than \$14 million in funding, which represents an increase of \$3 million from the previous financial year.

Grants provided by the VMC in 2014-15 were awarded across the following seven categories:

- *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 Training (DET) 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 DET.
- *Multifaith Initiatives and Interfaith Networks* – supporting interfaith activities which engage different faith groups as well as the wider community.
- *Building and Facilities Improvement* – funding essential repairs and small improvements for community owned buildings.



The following are just a few examples of the 2,500 events, organisations and projects funded through this program.

#### **Community Languages Schools**

A total of \$150,000 was allocated by the VMC and Department of Education and Training (DET) to the Community Languages Schools category in 2014-15, with over 70 grants provided across the state.

#### **Friends of Norway Community Language School**

This newly established Norwegian language school has monthly classes for more than 50 students who learn Norwegian through traditional songs, nursery rhymes, dance and stories. The grant has been used to extend the number of teaching hours and to purchase teaching materials.

#### **Chinese Association of Victoria Inc.**

The Association is developing a book and CD called Practical Conversational Chinese for its students that can be downloaded onto tablets or mp3 players to aid language conversation practice at any time.

#### **Strengthening Multicultural Communities**

The Strengthening Multicultural Communities category provided nearly \$880,000 to assist 135 community organisations in running 12-month projects to address unmet needs within the multicultural community.

#### **Australian Karen Foundation (AKF)**

In consultation with Latrobe University and Victoria University, AKF has developed a leadership program for young adults in the Karen community. Drawing on strong partnerships with seven other organisations, AKF will run an 11-month leadership program focused on developing knowledge and skills for 12 young people.

#### **City of Greater Dandenong (CGD)**

CGD has implemented a capacity building program to provide training and support for four culturally and linguistically diverse community groups to run successful, effective celebrations and events. Learnings from the participating event organisers will be shared with the Event Organisers' Network, a Council facilitated network for all event organisers in the City.

#### **Nmlen**

Based in Mildura, this project is seeking to support up to 100 students aged 15-19 years to connect with local businesses and industry to find work placements. The project will also provide cultural awareness support to the businesses.

Pictured above: Premier of Victoria, The Hon. Daniel Andrews with community members at the Premier's Gala Dinner 2015. Photographer: Jorge de Araujo.

## Appendix 1

### Regional Advisory Council Membership

<b>EASTERN METROPOLITAN</b>	Ms Jennifer Vieyra	<b>BARWON SOUTH WEST</b>
<b>Chairperson:</b>	Mr Yadata Saba	<b>Chairperson:</b>
Mr Huss Mustafa	Ms Ezgi Sahin	Dr Teresa De Fazio
<b>Community Representatives:</b>	Ms Anjali Tikoo	<b>Community Representatives:</b>
Ms Nildhara Gadani	Ms Marisa Vedar	Ms Stella Tzaninis
Mr Rishi Kandel	Mr Bom Yonzon	Mr Andrew Alexander
Ms Lizzy (Nyangak) Kuoth	Mr Rick Nugent	Mr Milovan Arandjelovic
Mr Danny Ong	Local Government Representatives:	Mr Florio Skratulja
Mr Bright Chinganya	Mr Gautam Gupta	Mr Gary Thompson
Ms Birgit Goetz	Mr Bo Li	Ms Sally Trigg
Mr Albert Fatileh	Ms Romany Amarasingham	Mr Michael Martinez
Ms Chandani Kuruppu		Local Government Representative:
Mr Mohamed Mohideen		Mr Eddy Kontelj
Ms Tina Stathopoulos (Douvos)	<b>HUME</b>	
Ms Maria McCarthy (resigned)	<b>Chairperson:</b>	<b>LODDEN MALLEE</b>
Local Government Representatives:	Mr Chidambaram Srinivasan	<b>Chairperson:</b>
Mr Giuseppe Cossari	<b>Community Representatives:</b>	Mr Abesalom Nega
Ms Julie Salomon	Ms Susan Ingleton	<b>Community Representatives:</b>
	Mr Vijayakumar (Vijay) Kuttappan	Ms Angela Curthoys
<b>SOUTHERN METROPOLITAN</b>	Mr Brett Sanderson	Ms Winifred Scott
<b>Chairperson:</b>	Mr Rashidi Sumaili	Mr Peter Byrne
Mr Grahame Leonard AM	Ms Barbara Brown	Ms Susan Denny
<b>Community Representatives:</b>	Dr Apollo Nsubuga-Kyobe	Ms Kaye Graves
Mr Wilhem Morgan	Local Government Representatives:	Ms Mary Ruane St-Clair
Mr Nason Mwanza	Mr Dean Williams	Mr Sudesh Tiwari
Mr Marco Nazzaro	Ms Charlene Norton	Ms Noemi Cummings
Ms Jenny Semple	Mr Charles Halter	Local Government Representative:
Mr Chandra Kamat		Ms Jill Joslyn
Mr Eric Cheng	<b>GRAMPIANS</b>	
Mr Sam Navarria	<b>Acting Chairperson:</b>	<b>GIPPSLAND</b>
Mr Iman Riman	Ms Safa Almarhoun	<b>Chairperson:</b>
Mr Zuben Rustomjee	(Chairperson until April 2015:	Ms Elizabeth Drozd
Ms Sarah Williams	Chin Tan)	<b>Community Representatives:</b>
Local Government Representatives:	Community Representatives:	Mr Murphy Singh Aneja
Mr Claude Ullin	Ms Ann Foley	Ms Cate Chaiyot
Ms Roz Blades	Ms Suzanne Gatz	Mr Brodie Logue
Ms Sharon Sykes	Mr Manzoor Mian	Dr Ka Chun Tse
	Ms Mona Hatwal	Dr Ali Kahn
<b>NORTH AND WEST METROPOLITAN</b>	Ms Meeta Narsi	Mr Sandy Kam
<b>Chairperson:</b>	Mr Barry Petrovski	Ms Soula Kanellopoulos
Ms Jenny Matic	Mr Norman Prueter	Dr Christine Lee
<b>Community Representatives:</b>	Dr Sundram Sivamalai	Mr J. Murray Lobley
Ms Kathy Brunton	Mr Frank Williams	Ms Lisa Sinha
Mr Antonio Benticontri	Local Government Representatives:	
Mr Joseph Haweil	Ms Anne Champness	
	Ms Frances Salenga	



*Premier's Gala Dinner 2015*

Photographer: Jorge de Araujo

Appendix 2

Victoria's Multicultural Awards for Excellence Recipient List 2014

<b>PREMIER'S AWARD FOR COMMUNITY HARMONY</b>	Mr Yadata Saba	<b>BUSINESS AWARD - CORPORATE INNOVATION</b>
Mr J Murray Lobley	Mr Anil Sharma	Maurice Blackburn Lawyers
<b>MERITORIOUS SERVICE IN THE COMMUNITY</b>	Ms Shan E Shen	<b>BUSINESS AWARD - VICTORIAN MULTICULTURAL MARKETING AWARD</b>
<b>Individuals:</b>	Mrs Olga Shonina	Chinese Digital Media
Mr Siri Krishan Auplish	Mr Joseph Zuwu Sumo	<b>EDUCATION AWARDS</b>
Ms Luba Baksheev	Mr Vinh Dinh Tran	Wilmot Road Primary School
Dr Nisha Bhatnagar	Mrs Vasilia Tsousis	Dandenong High School
Mrs Sophia Borobokas	Mr Sanjay Unadkat	<b>LOCAL GOVERNMENT AWARD</b>
Mrs Bianca Cervini	Mr Ranjan Vaidya	Greater Shepparton City Council
Mr Eric Chen	Mrs Cat-Tuong Vu	<b>POLICE AND COMMUNITY MULTICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE AWARDS</b>
Mr Bright Chinganya	Mrs Margaret Wehl	Sgt Timothy Lambourne – Police Annual Multicultural Award
Mr John Chrisomallis	Mrs Halina Wood	Mr John Chau – Police Multicultural Media Award
Mr Peter Cichello	Mrs Lily Wu	PSO Harminder
Mr James Cusack	Mr Mukhles Yousif	Victoria Police Academy Community Encounters Program – Police Community Exemplary Award
Ms Emily Lee D'Cruz	Mr Hassan Yusuf	<b>MEDIA AWARDS</b>
Mr Nosrat Dehghan	Mrs Tatiana Zemlinsky	<b>Individual:</b>
Ms Sanja Drljaca	Mrs Heping Zhou	Ms Preeti Jabbal
Mrs Uma Ganapathireddy	Mrs Malgorzata Zuchowska	<b>Organisation:</b>
Mr Graham Goulding	Organisations:	SBS Radio
Ms Nina Lan Jun Huang	Greek Orthodox Community of Gippsland	<b>HONOUR ROLL</b>
Mrs Antonina Kichakova	Healthy Tourism Senior Citizens Club "Vigor" Ensemble Nostalgia	Mr Guillaume Nyakaboyi
Mr Steve Kovacic	Polish Community Council of Victoria Inc	<b>AMBASSADOR AWARDS</b>
Ms Terezia Kral	<b>SERVICE DELIVERY TO MULTICULTURAL VICTORIA</b>	<b>Young Person:</b>
Mr Marama Kufi	<b>Individuals:</b>	Mr Mladen Krsman
Mrs Hanh Le	Ms Molina Asthana	<b>Individual:</b>
Mrs Eszter Linka	Mr Patrick Francis	Mrs Ngatuaine Hosking
Dr Che-Sam Lo	Ms Lesley Francis	<b>Organisation:</b>
Mr Diego Luppino	Ms Sahida (Ee'da) Ibrahim	Footscray Community Arts Centre
Mr Alister MacLeod	Dr Muhammad Khalissi	
Mr Massoud Majidi	Fr Simeon Kichakov	
Dr Iamir Maloka	Ms Lily Silic	
Mr Sugu Maran	<b>Organisations:</b>	
Mr Antonio Mautone	Chin News Channel	
Ms Kumari Middleton	Federation of Indian Associations of Victorian	
Mrs Amparo Miller	Kalyna Care	
Mr Bhattachary Mudumba	National Council of Jewish Women (Victoria) Community Services Inc – Caring Mums	
Mr Yasseen Musa	Russian Ethnic Representative Council of Victoria Inc	
Mr Pino Narduzzo	Temple Society Bentleigh	
Mrs Meeta Narsi	German School	
Ms Gaetana (Nina) Nicoletti		
Ms Belinda Selen Ozgun		
Mrs Irene Papaioannou		
Mr Frank Patti		
Mr Van-Hung Phan		
Mr Karna Rana		





*Premier's Gala Dinner 2015*

Photographer: Jorge de Araujo



*Viva Victoria multicultural festival 2015*

Photographer: Jorge de Araujo





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