



VICTORIAN

MULTICULTURAL

COMMISSION

Annual Report
2018–2019

VICTORIAN
multicultural
commission
strengthening our community





Baker Boy at Culture Waves, March 2019

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CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

It is with great pride that I share this year's report on the outcomes of the Victorian Multicultural Commission's efforts to promote multiculturalism and strengthen our community.

We are privileged to work with and advocate for culturally diverse Victorians. Every day, we witness the incredible generosity, kindness and resilience of our communities. Our engagement with communities is at the core of what we do – it strengthens the advice we provide to government and helps to directly influence decisions that affect multicultural communities.

In 2018/19, we hosted another inspirational Cultural Diversity Week, bringing together Victorians from all over the state to celebrate our diversity at Victoria's Multicultural Festival, Culture Waves and the Premier's Gala Dinner. We saw the incredible growth of our VMC Film Festival with more than 1,500 entries from

filmmakers, many of them young people. Their inspiring films showcased positive stories of multiculturalism and, thanks to our Cultural Diversity Week Sponsor SBS, the winning five films will feature on SBS On Demand.

We forged a collaborative partnership last year with the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) which saw three emerging journalists from culturally diverse backgrounds undertake a 12-week paid internship. Through the program, they gained unparalleled experience in the industry and built networks that will set them up for future success. Excitingly, two of our interns went on to secure employment at the ABC after the program.

Our inaugural Multicultural Chambers of Commerce luncheon brought together the Minister for Multicultural Affairs and over 150 multicultural business leaders, government representatives and Consular Corps members to discuss the state of the economy and create business opportunities.

We launched an innovative new partnership with Food Next Door and Regional Development Victoria that will support refugees and migrants in Mildura to grow culturally important crops. The program will not only create opportunities for economic participation but will help with settlement outcomes and the health and wellbeing of migrants in the community.

More than 14.5 million people were reached with the stories of our Ambassadors for Multiculturalism. Profiling five well-known personalities across Victoria's food, business, entertainment and sporting industries, our Ambassadors helped to challenge divisive narratives by promoting the benefits of multiculturalism to our society.



Ross Alatsas at the VMC Film Festival, May 2019



Stiltesque roving performer at Victoria's Multicultural Festival, March 2019

The beginning of 2019 was a challenging one for our multicultural communities with acts of violence in Christchurch, New Zealand and Sri Lanka sending shockwaves across the globe. While these events take considerable toll on our communities, the united response of hope and peace demonstrates why our shared values and common humanity will always prevail, and this is what drives us at the Commission. Our very own Multifaith Advisory Group displayed this strength of unity in releasing a statement of solidarity in support of our Muslim communities.

We also worked actively to prevent and respond to family violence, collaborating across government and communities to explore how we can build greater awareness of the issue among multicultural communities and to build their capacity for prevention and response.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Ms Helen Kapalos, who resigned from her position as Chairperson in May 2019. With her creative approach, media experience and passion to achieve positive outcomes for multicultural communities, Helen introduced a new dimension to our work. Among her many achievements I would like to highlight her commitment to giving young multicultural Victorians a voice. This included the establishment and impressive growth of the VMC Film Festival, a new addition to the Cultural Diversity Week program in the Culture Waves concert and the ABC internship program.

On behalf of all of us at the Commission, we thank Helen for her leadership, dedication and contribution to multiculturalism in Victoria.

We are proud of what we have been able to achieve this year in celebrating and advocating for Victoria's multicultural communities. On behalf of the Commissioners, I thank our colleagues across the Victorian Government, including the staff of the Multicultural Affairs and Social Cohesion Division, our voluntary Regional Advisory Council members, our Cultural Diversity Week sponsors and the staff of the Commission – none of this would be possible without their support.

I would also like to thank my fellow Commissioners for bringing incomparable dedication and excitement to our work every day and for making my time at the Commission the life-changing experience it has been. While I have endeavoured to give as much as I possibly could over eight years of service as Deputy Chairperson, I have certainly garnered more from all those that I have had the good fortune to engage with.

I look forward to welcoming our new Chairperson and Commissioners, who will inherit an organisation rich with opportunity and abundant in passionate people. I am excited to see what the future holds and look forward to working alongside the Commission to support our multicultural society long into the future.

Ross Alatsas
Acting Chairperson

THE YEAR IN NUMBERS

6,385,000

people in Victoria



49%

born overseas or at least one parent born overseas

247

countries of birth

26%

speak a language other than English at home

234

languages and dialects

135

faiths



More than
480

meetings and events attended by Commissioners

1

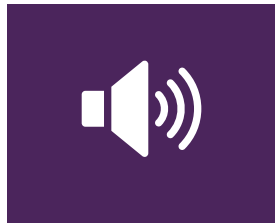
new Commissioner

11

Commission meetings

8

Regional Advisory Councils (RAC)



160

RAC members

41

RAC meetings and community conversations

More than
1,000

community issues and solutions discussed

18

Multicultural Champions



42

groups represented in the VMC Multicultural Chambers of Commerce Group

More than
150

people attended the inaugural VMC Multicultural Chambers of Commerce Group luncheon

5

Ambassadors for Multiculturalism

14.5M

people reached through editorial coverage

More than
3M

people reached through social media

1,400

guests at the Premier's Gala Dinner

More than
38,000

people at Victoria's Multicultural Festival and Culture Waves

More than
1,500

entries in the VMC Film Festival

128

community Cultural Diversity Week events

64

recipients of Victoria's Multicultural Awards for Excellence



\$142,872

in Community Support Fund grants

31

projects funded



VMC Commissioners and staff with guests at the inaugural VMC Multicultural Chambers of Commerce Luncheon, June 2019

ABOUT US

The Victorian Multicultural Commission (VMC) promotes and champions diversity and inclusion across all areas of society and is the primary conduit between multicultural communities and the Victorian Government. Established in 1983 and now constituted under the *Multicultural Victoria Act 2011*, the VMC is an independent body dedicated to strengthening multiculturalism and supporting diverse communities to participate in all aspects of Victorian life.

Informed by regular community consultations including through a network of Regional Advisory Councils, the VMC provides advice to the Victorian Government to help shape public policy and the delivery of government services for diverse communities.

The VMC is led by 12 commissioners from a range of professional and cultural backgrounds. They engage directly with our communities and advocate on their behalf. Commissioners meet monthly, attend community events, chair Regional Advisory Councils and participate in other events and meetings as required.

Operational support is provided to the VMC by the Office of the Victorian Multicultural Commission and the Multicultural Affairs and Social Cohesion Division at the Department of Premier and Cabinet.



Ross Alatsas

**Deputy Chairperson
Acting Chairperson:
May to August 2019**

CURRENT TERM: November 2017 to August 2019

FIRST APPOINTED: September 2011

Ross Alatsas has a long history of involvement in Victoria's Greek and wider multicultural communities, having been General Manager of the Greek Media Group since 1997. He has been involved with various committees and advisory councils promoting Victoria's cultural diversity, including the steering committee for the Asian Football League's 2015 Asian Cup. Ross assisted in the establishment of Victoria's first 24-hour Chinese radio station 3CW, and also served as a member of the business advisory council for community television station, C31. Among Ross' achievements in his time on the VMC is his initiation of the establishment of the Multicultural Chambers of Commerce Group, which he chairs.



Sisay Dinku
 Chairperson, Northern and
 Western Metropolitan Regional
 Advisory Council

CURRENT TERM: May 2017 to August 2019
FIRST APPOINTED: May 2017

Sisay Dinku has been widely engaged in community development in the African-Australian diaspora and the broader multicultural community in Victoria. He is a founding member of the Celebrate African Australians awards program, an AFL Multicultural Community Ambassador and Chairperson of the African Union Delegates Liaison. He also serves on the board of Multicultural Consulting Services and an Australian charity providing books to children in Africa. Sisay has managed and worked on a number of programs to assist new migrants to compete in the local labour market – especially in industries experiencing skills shortages – through job search plans, Australian work culture orientations and employability skills training.



Tina Hosseini
 Chairperson, Eastern
 Metropolitan Regional
 Advisory Council

CURRENT TERM: October 2017 to August 2021
FIRST APPOINTED: October 2015

Tina Hosseini is a researcher at Deakin University who is currently working on a prevention-based adolescent health project. She is an active member of the Victorian Red Cross board and the Iranian Women’s Association. She originally joined the VMC as Youth Commissioner, having been a member of the Multicultural Youth Network and holding youth leadership roles at the Red Cross and the Federation of Ethnic Communities’ Councils of Australia. Tina completed a research-based Master of Science at the University of Melbourne with a focus on fetal physiology.



Walter Rapoport
 Chairperson, Southern
 Metropolitan Regional
 Advisory Council

CURRENT TERM: November 2017 to August 2021
FIRST APPOINTED: November 2017

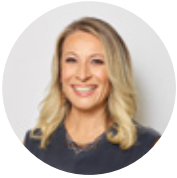
Walter Rapoport is a former Chairperson of the Council of Christians and Jews (Victoria) and edited the Council’s annual journal, Geshet, from 2013 to 2016. Walter has had a long and abiding interest in interfaith and intercultural engagement and served as the inaugural Chairman of the interfaith relations committee of the B’nai B’rith Anti-Defamation Commission, an Australian organisation dedicated to combatting anti-Semitism and all other forms of racism and hatred. He also chaired the steering committees of two projects delivered under the Commonwealth Government’s Living in Harmony grants program, ‘Building Bridges’ and ‘Embracing Youth’. He is co-founder and joint-CEO of a finance company.



**Dr Sundram
 Sivamalai**
 Community Representative
 Commissioner

CURRENT TERM: November 2017 to August 2019
FIRST APPOINTED: October 2015

Dr Sundram Sivamalai is Deputy Chairperson of the Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria (ECCV) and was nominated by the ECCV to the role of Community Representative Commissioner on the VMC. Based in Ballarat, Sundram has applied his extensive experience in public health to a range of local, state and national board appointments, covering issues such as responsible gambling, medical research and mental health. Born in Malaysia, Sundram maintains a keen interest in the Malay language as well as his native tongue, Tamil, while also learning Japanese, Vietnamese and Hindi. Sundram was awarded the Australian Government’s Centenary Medal for his work with migrants.



Sonia Vignjevic

Chairperson,
Grampians Regional
Advisory Council

CURRENT TERM: October 2015 to August 2019

FIRST APPOINTED: October 2015

Sonia Vignjevic is an executive manager with significant experience in the multicultural, migration and settlement sectors. She currently works at Settlement Services International and has previously held executive positions at the Eastern Community Legal Centre, South East Community Links, Anglicare Victoria and the Australian Red Cross. Sonia holds a Bachelor of Arts with a major in psychology and human movement, a Graduate Diploma in International Law, a Post Graduate Certificate in Trauma Counselling and Psychotherapy, and is an Australian Registered Migration Agent.



Dr Mimmie Claudine Ngum Chi Watts

Chairperson, Hume Regional
Advisory Council

CURRENT TERM: October 2015 to August 2019

FIRST APPOINTED: October 2015

Dr Mimmie Watts is a public health expert with a focus on women's health, gender health and international health. Her expertise also includes social inclusion, chronic disease prevention and management, health promotion, migrant and refugee health, as well as curriculum development and teaching research methods. Mimmie is involved in the implementation of the Victorian Government's first Sexual and Reproductive Health Plan and has been involved in federal government initiatives to prevent female genital mutilation. She is Chairperson of the African Diaspora Women Summit Committee, Deputy Chairperson of Women's Health West, an AMES Australia board member and former Western Health board member.



Rosaria Zarro

Chairperson,
Barwon South West
Regional Advisory Council

CURRENT TERM: November 2017 to August 2021

FIRST APPOINTED: November 2017

Rosaria Zarro has been an educator for the past 17 years, with experience teaching Italian, science and history in government schools and cultural organisations. She has worked for Museums Victoria, Museo Italiano and the State Library of Victoria to produce and deliver education programs based around their exhibitions and collections. Rosaria has delivered many innovative programs in the Italian language at the Melbourne Museum, Immigration Museum and Scienceworks and more recently has worked on the development of programs and resources in French, Spanish and Japanese.



Khayshie Tilak Ramesh

Youth Commissioner

CURRENT TERM: January 2019 to
August 2019

FIRST APPOINTED: January 2019

Khayshie Tilak Ramesh is a passionate advocate for young people and multicultural communities. She is co-founder and vice-president of Young People for Refugees, a youth advocacy service in Bendigo, and a board director of Loddon Campaspe Multicultural Services. She has also been a member of the Victorian Government's Multicultural Youth Network. In 2019, Khayshie was awarded Law Student of the Year by the Law Institute of Victoria.

Outgoing Commissioners

TSEBIN TCHEN resigned as Commissioner in July 2019.

HELEN KAPALOS resigned as Chairperson in May 2019.

SAM ALMALIKI resigned as Commissioner in March 2019.

CREATING OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTICIPATE

OBJECTIVE 1 Promote full participation by Victoria's diverse communities in the social, cultural, economic and political life of Victoria.

Employment pathways for young multicultural journalists

The VMC partnered with the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) to deliver Australia's first media internship exclusively for young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Launched in January 2019, the program aims to champion and increase cultural diversity within the highly competitive Australian media industry to better reflect Victoria's diverse community and to create opportunities for young people to share their stories on a mainstream platform.

The program delivered three paid 12-week internships, including three four-week rotations tailored to the skills and interest of each intern in ABC's metropolitan news production, metropolitan radio and regional divisions. Interns were also provided mentoring during the program to support long-term career pathways and professional development opportunities.

VMC Multicultural Chambers of Commerce Group

The Multicultural Chambers of Commerce Group is a network of more than 40 Victorian chamber groups dedicated to supporting community and economic prosperity in our state by exchanging ideas, business and employment opportunities for multicultural communities.

Chaired by Ross Alatsas, VMC Deputy Chairperson, the group helps to inform the Minister for Multicultural Affairs about challenges and opportunities for Victoria's diverse business owners and works collaboratively with Small Business Victoria.

For the full list of member organisations, please see Appendix I.

Connecting multicultural business communities

Business executives from across Victoria gathered together in June 2019 to exchange ideas and foster opportunities for collaboration at the inaugural VMC Multicultural Chambers of Commerce luncheon.

Generously sponsored by the Commonwealth Bank of Australia, the event featured Chief Economist at CommSec, Craig James, as the guest speaker who provided attendees with an economic update focusing on opportunities for Victorian businesses over the next 12 months.

Guests included Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Hon Richard Wynne MP, General Manager of Multicultural Community Banking, Huss Mustafa OAM, members of the Consular Corp, representatives from the various chamber groups and VMC Commissioners.



Inaugural VMC Multicultural Chambers of Commerce Group Luncheon, June 2019

VMC Film Festival

The third annual VMC Film Festival was an enormous success with more than 1,500 entries and a sold-out screening of the top 12 films at the Australian Centre for the Moving Image (ACMI) on 23 May 2019.

With efforts to promote cultural diversity and inclusion under threat for some time now, and fear and division on the rise around the globe, filmmakers were asked to highlight the positive side of cultural diversity and the potential barriers to social inclusion under the theme *'Making diversity great again.'*

Established and emerging filmmakers from across Victoria and Australia, many of them from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, answered the call with an extraordinary array of interpretations. The depth of talent and insights evident in the films demonstrated the relevance of the subject as well as the festival's enormous potential for growth.

More than 500 people attended the festival launch, including up-and-coming filmmakers, industry guests, supporters of the VMC and sponsors of Cultural Diversity Week, alongside Pauline Richards MP representing the Minister for Multicultural Affairs and

Bruce Atkinson representing the Shadow Minister for Multicultural Affairs.

Following the festival launch, the Immigration Museum offered a weekend of free-to-public screenings of the winning films, and SBS Australia will launch a special collection of the films for audiences to view on SBS On Demand.

2019 WINNING FILMS

- ▶ **PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARD:** Scopa – Written by Mark Samuel Bonanno, directed by Max Miller and produced by Jessica Galea
- ▶ **UNDER 25 AWARD:** A Phone Call to Heaven (致电天堂) – Written, directed and produced by Yurou (Selina) Zhang
- ▶ **OVER 25 AWARD:** Memory – Written, directed and produced by Natalia Ortiz Ceberio
- ▶ **JUDGE'S AWARD:** One of the Good Ones – Directed by Leah Oliveria and produced by Mairin Angel
- ▶ **ENCOURAGEMENT AWARD:** One, Two – Written, directed and produced by Rachel Chen



VMC Film Festival, May 2019



Mariachis Los Romanticos at the VMC Film Festival, May 2019



Encouragement Award winner Rachel Chen with Ross Alatas and Fiona Williams, SBS, at the VMC Film Festival, May 2019

The future of multiculturalism on screen

The Summer Film Program is an innovative collaboration between the VMC and Swinburne University of Technology that aims to generate new understanding and representations of contemporary multiculturalism.

Each year, Swinburne researchers Dr Vincent Giarusso and Dr Glenda Ballantyne recruit current and past film and animation students to produce short films that explore perspectives of a generation born into 'multicultural Australia'. Launched in 2017, initial research findings highlight this generation's willingness to embrace Australia's multicultural identity as they seek to redefine it. The final research report is anticipated for release in late-2019.

Through the program, students are invited to submit their films to the VMC Film Festival. Student Rachel Chen, a first-generation Australian whose parents migrated from China in the 1990s, was awarded the 2019 Encouragement Award for her short drama, *One, Two*. It was Rachel's first time directing a film set and a first for many of her crew. She believes this recognition will provide inspiration to her fellow students and future participants of the program.

IMPROVING ACCESS TO SERVICES

OBJECTIVE 2 Promote access by Victoria's diverse communities to services made available by governments and other bodies.

Informing policy development and reform

The valuable information received through our Regional Advisory Councils is used to help inform policy, legislation and the delivery of government and community services and assists the Commission to strengthen and promote harmony in Victoria.

Issues raised by council members are provided to the Minister for Multicultural Affairs and relevant government agencies. The VMC also engages regularly with government departments and agencies, Royal Commissions and Parliamentary Inquiries to provide advice and content relevant to its objectives and functions.

GENDER EQUALITY

The VMC responded to an exposure draft of the Gender Equality Bill, advocating for the inclusion of cultural diversity as an integral aspect of the Bill.

Recommendations outlined in the submission included critical actions to progress gender equality for women of diverse backgrounds such as:

- ▶ equal access to employment opportunities
- ▶ the introduction of 21st century workplace practices including family-friendly policies
- ▶ strategies to develop career pathways and promotion for women from culturally diverse backgrounds.

The submission also recommended a thorough review of recruitment practices and processes to identify and address unconscious bias.

REPORTABLE DEATHS

The Coroners Court of Victoria invited the Commission to make a submission to its Review of Reportable Deaths in Victoria.

Through Regional Advisory Councils and other community consultation and engagement activities, the VMC identified the need for greater investigation into deaths in custody or detention centres involving people who are newly arrived or settled. The VMC also identified drowning, fire-related deaths, suicide, domestic violence and employment as relevant issues for consideration.

Analysis of cultural diversity in data on reported deaths was suggested to help understand causal factors that could inform strategies to reduce or prevent avoidable deaths. The VMC further advised on the need for culturally diverse communication and education strategies including the provision of culturally-responsive and translated information and materials aimed at increasing community awareness and understanding and making the reporting process more user-friendly.



Sisay Dinku at a Northern and Western Metropolitan Regional Advisory Council meeting, November 2017

The VMC acknowledged the court's existing engagement with volunteer groups like the Country Fire Authority, Life Saving Victoria and health care providers and recommended this continue to increase awareness of risks and safety measures among multicultural communities.

INTEGRATION, EMPLOYMENT AND SETTLEMENT OUTCOMES

The VMC submitted to the Australian Government's Review into Integration, Employment and Settlement Outcomes for Refugees and Humanitarian Entrants.

Migrants bring with them unique skills and cross-cultural experiences that increase their capability to identify business ideas and stimulate creativity. There is also a higher representation of entrepreneurs among humanitarian entrants who actively contribute to our economy and local communities.

The VMC advised that a centralised and coordinated governance of settlement services would deliver significant improvements, suggesting the Australian Government realign its multicultural affairs and settlement services functions.

Political leadership and a public positive narrative are also necessary – reframing towards a more positive and inclusive dialogue that recognises the social, cultural and economic value of migrants would improve their sense of belonging and social cohesion.



The World Kitchen demonstration in the Global Garden at Victoria's Multicultural Festival, March 2019

Influencing service design

The VMC also leverages the information and insights obtained through community consultations to engage with the private sector, industry bodies, universities and international institutions to inform service design and learn about different approaches to solving problems.

BUILDING INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENTS

The VMC presented to 175 students at RMIT University as part of a global leadership experience on developing inclusive strategies. Inclusion was highlighted as a means to ensuring a highly collaborative and participative social and economic environment where everyone feels they belong. In addition, the VMC emphasised that delivering infrastructure and services that address the needs of diverse communities requires strong leadership, vision and a commitment to co-design and community engagement.

The VMC also stressed that inclusive strategies help to address structural inequality and provide access for systemically disadvantaged groups, including those who lack education or financial resources and refugees and migrants.

INTERPRETING

At a presentation to more than 300 interpreters, the VMC provided insights from community consultations about issues relating to the access and use of interpreting services.

The VMC also highlighted the high esteem in which interpreters are held by multicultural communities, noting the vital role they play in Victorian society and how the trust and integrity they build results in positive outcomes for settlement, access to public services and to building a sense of acceptance and belonging.

INTERNATIONAL APPROACHES TO MULTICULTURALISM

The VMC met with an international delegation from the Institute of Ethnic Studies at the University of Kebangsaan, Malaysia. The Malaysian university team was undertaking work to develop a social inclusion index and report for the Malaysian Government.

The Malaysian delegation heard that building a sense of belonging within communities helps to increase acceptance of others.



Hume Regional Advisory Council meeting, October 2017

The VMC explained how the community's high level of trust was a cornerstone to ensuring ongoing relationships and open dialogues, as well as the key to advocating to government regarding the needs of culturally diverse community members.

Through the discussion, the VMC learned that while Victoria's approach to multiculturalism is focused on our shared diversity, in Malaysia the focus is on national unity. The conversation was a great opportunity to share experiences and knowledge in our respective journeys to fostering and supporting a harmonious multicultural society.

Raising awareness of family violence among diverse communities

In 2018, the Victorian Parliament changed the legal definition of family violence to include forced marriage and dowry-related abuse. In response to this, the Multifaith Advisory Group and the VMC formed a project group with the Department of Premier and Cabinet and the Department of Justice and Community Safety.

The group is working to raise awareness and understanding of family violence among multicultural communities, specifically in accordance with the *Family Violence Protection Act 2008*. By educating community leaders, they are also aiming to build the capacity of communities to prevent and respond to family violence.

The group includes more than 25 members of different faiths and multicultural communities, including Muslim, Christian, Hindu, Pakistani, Shia, Iran, Burma, Sikh, Arabic, Indian, Farsi, Nepalese, South Sudanese, Eritrea and Cameroon.

The project is currently underway, with the Multifaith Advisory Group providing ongoing advice and recommendations for the delivery of educative materials for faith and multicultural communities.

ENCOURAGING CULTURAL EXPRESSION

OBJECTIVE 3 Encourage all of Victoria’s diverse communities to retain and express their social identity and cultural inheritance and to promote mutual respect.

Community Support Fund

The VMC’s Community Support Fund aims to support Victoria’s culturally diverse communities by providing funds to address urgent needs or existing activities which fall outside the scope of the Victorian Government’s Community Grants programs. In 2018/19, the VMC provided almost \$143,000 to deliver 31 projects that promote and celebrate multiculturalism.

The Edmund Strzelecki Melbourne Polish School received a \$10,000 grant to deliver Polish language and culture classes to primary and secondary students in Melbourne. Based in Endeavour Hills, it is the largest Polish language school in Victoria. Run on a completely voluntary basis, student learning is enriched by incorporating Polish culture and traditions within the

classroom where students learn about the history and geography of Poland and participate in a range of cultural activities.

More than \$8,000 was given to support the Dinka Community Cultural Day in Brimbank City Council. Showcasing a variety of African food, dancing, singing and other cultural activities, the free event encouraged participation and inclusiveness of new and emerging communities in Victoria. The event brought together 17 sub-communities of the Dinka in Melbourne and regional Victoria including the South Sudanese community, African community groups, local councils and community members across other cultures.

For the full list of 2018/19 Community Support Fund recipients, please see Appendix II.



Help Himalayan Youth Dancers at Victoria’s Multicultural Festival, March 2019

Community Grants programs

Each year the Victorian Government funds a wide range of multicultural initiatives and events through the Community Grants programs. The VMC promotes the grants to communities and Commissioners participate in the assessment panels.

- ▶ **MULTICULTURAL FESTIVALS AND EVENTS PROGRAM** encourages participation of the whole Victorian community in festivals and events to celebrate and embrace our vibrant multicultural diversity. The program supports culturally diverse communities to feel more connected to their cultural heritage and identity.
- ▶ **MULTICULTURAL COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE FUND** offers grants to culturally diverse communities across Victoria to support the building, upgrading and fit-out of community infrastructure. The program supports communities to feel connected with their traditional culture and identity by providing safe and accessible community spaces.
- ▶ **CAPACITY BUILDING AND PARTICIPATION PROGRAM** strengthens the participation, inclusion and contribution of multicultural Victorians by funding initiatives that build their knowledge and skills and address priority issues, including family violence.
- ▶ **COMMUNITY HARMONY PROGRAM** supports Victorians to have a strong sense of belonging through initiatives that address the root causes of social disharmony and racial, ethnic and religious intolerance.

Traditional agricultural practices improving settlement outcomes

The Food Next Door Community Demonstration Farm supports migrants to grow culturally important crops, revive idle farmland and demonstrate the economic viability of small-scale regenerative farming in the Mallee region.

Funded by Regional Development Victoria with support from the VMC, the project helps to relieve the suffering or distress experienced by newly arrived migrants and refugee groups.

Eating and sharing food is a crucial factor in building relationships and inclusiveness among people of diverse backgrounds. Food Next Door takes this concept one step further: it creates a collaborative environment for new migrants to continue to practice their traditional methods of cultivating land, and in a way that keeps them socially included in the region and connects them with long-term local residents of Mildura.

Launched in June 2019, the three-year project builds on the Sunraysia Burundian Garden in Mildura, a small plantation growing African maize. The garden was developed and managed by more than 100 Burundi community volunteers, with the project demonstrating significant benefit to locals and migrants alike, including improved wellbeing and mental health and stronger local food networks and capability.

Community events

From the centre of Melbourne to the edge of Victoria, and from large festivals to small gatherings, Victorians both young and old came together to celebrate our multicultural state at more than 128 community events during Cultural Diversity Week 2019.

A broad range of organisations supported the week, from youth and health organisations to arts and community groups, and education institutions across primary, secondary and early childhood settings.

There was no shortage of multicultural and Harmony Day events in regional Victoria, with community organisations in Wangaratta, Bendigo and Ararat holding a number of cultural and religious celebrations, music and art performances and sporting activities to highlight our diversity.

Throughout Melbourne, community events came to life across a range of postcodes from Epping to Springvale and Bayswater and highlighted a breadth of activities - The Welcome Dinner Project fostered a sense of belonging with international students at the City of Melbourne's Lord Mayor's Student Welcome, One Beat One Love held an African Victorian festival celebration at the Immigration Museum, social enterprise Space2b's Laneway Festival hosted a vibrant market of diverse music, arts, crafts and dance in St Kilda, and Williamstown's Police Station opened its doors for a special lunch event to share staff stories about migrating to Australia.

FOSTERING COMMUNITY HARMONY

OBJECTIVE 4 Promote co-operation between bodies concerned with multicultural affairs and diversity.

OBJECTIVE 5 Promote unity, understanding and harmony among Victoria's diverse communities.



Founder and Director of the Interfaith Centre of Melbourne and Multifaith Advisory Group member Reverend Helen Summers at the Day of Prayer for drought affected farmers, September 2018

Multifaith Advisory Group

The Multifaith Advisory Group is chaired by the VMC Chairperson and comprises 27 religious leaders from various faiths including Christian, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, Sikh, Jewish and Baha'i. The group assists the Victorian Government to understand and appropriately respond to faith-related issues in Victoria and to support people from a diverse array of cultural and religious backgrounds.

For the full list of Multifaith Advisory Group member organisations, please see Appendix III.

A unified faith response to religious vilification

In the aftermath of the Christchurch mosque attack during Friday Prayer on 15 March 2019, the Commission worked with the Multifaith Advisory Group to prepare a joint statement of support and solidarity with the Islamic community.

The statement, signed by all 27 religious leaders from the group and former VMC Chairperson Helen Kapalos, was published in the Herald Sun one week after the tragedy to promote community unity and harmony.

Helping faith leaders prevent and respond to family violence

Last year, the Multifaith Advisory Group established a family violence working group to respond to Recommendations 163 and 165 of the Royal Commission into Family Violence.

The working group developed a research project with the University of Melbourne and the Multicultural Centre for Women's Health. Phase one of the project launched in July 2018 and involved gathering international, national and Victorian literature as well as consultations with key stakeholders to explore how faith organisations, communities and leaders, could build capacity to prevent and respond to family violence and violence



Anglican Diocese of Melbourne and Multifaith Advisory Group member Bishop Phillip Huggins at the Day of Prayer for drought affected farmers, September 2018

against women. From this research, the group identified key stakeholders, current practices and evidence gaps to inform the development of recommendations on how faith communities can better respond to the problem.

The second and final phase of the project commenced in January 2019 and will continue until June 2020. The University of Melbourne is working with five leading organisations in different faith communities to develop and trial an evidence-based initiative to build the capacity of faith leaders in responding to and preventing family violence.

Fostering harmony between faith communities

Working in partnership with the Multifaith Advisory Group and the Department of Premier and Cabinet, the VMC helped to establish the Interfaith Community Fund.

The program will provide funding to faith-based organisations in Victoria to deliver initiatives that promote social harmony and acceptance, understanding and respect between faith communities. Applications were invited from May 2019, with successful recipients to be announced in the second half of 2019.



Young leaders from the Pasifika, African Diaspora and Indigenous communities come together at the intercultural workshop Culture Kings and Queens, Dec 2018



CELEBRATING OUR DIVERSITY

OBJECTIVE 6 Promote a better understanding of Victoria's diverse communities.

OBJECTIVE 7 Promote interaction between individuals and communities from diverse backgrounds.

Cultural Diversity Week

Victoria's largest multicultural celebration, Cultural Diversity Week, was a great success, with celebrations held across the state between 16 and 24 March 2019. With support from the Victorian Government, the VMC proudly coordinates the week to encourage Victorians to embrace and celebrate our state's diversity.

This year's theme *Proud to Belong: Your Generation, Your Stories* was all about sharing stories that reflect our

cultural heritage and celebrating how diversity lies at the core of our Victorian identity. *Your Generation, Your Stories* asked Victorians to think about the cultural ties and shared values that bring us together, what diversity means to each generation and how we can support each other.

Held in March each year, the week coincides with the United Nations Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and Harmony Day on 21 March.



Assembly Project at the Premier's Gala Dinner, March 2019

Premier's Gala Dinner

A much-anticipated event on the multicultural calendar, the Premier's Gala Dinner officially launched Cultural Diversity Week 2019 on Saturday 16 March at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre. Hosted by the Premier of Victoria, the Hon. Daniel Andrews, this year's Premier's Gala Dinner showcased the artistic talents of Victoria's multicultural communities through traditional and contemporary music and dance.

The event premiered the Assembly Project, an innovative cross-cultural collaboration bringing together 11 high-calibre Victorian musicians from a range of disciplines. The work was created in celebration of Cultural Diversity Week in partnership with Multicultural Arts Victoria and funded by Creative Victoria. Other performers included Hong De Lion and Dragon Dance Association, Young Voices of Melbourne, Youth Activating Youth, Mama Alto, Kira Puru, San Lazaro and The Merindas.

Attended by 1,400 people, the evening demonstrated just how strong our multicultural communities are. Falling on the day after the tragic attacks in Christchurch, New Zealand, the event included moving tributes to the people who lost their lives and provided a powerful platform for expressing our support for all faiths and communities, and reinforcing our shared values and common humanity.



Youth Activating Youth tribute performance to JJay de Melo at the Premier's Gala Dinner, March 2019

Victoria's Multicultural Festival

Held in Melbourne's iconic Federation Square on Saturday 23 March 2019, Victoria's Multicultural Festival transported more than 38,000 community visitors into an intercultural, intersectional, and intergenerational celebration of Victoria's cultural diversity.

Offering an extensive range of free entertainment and activities, the festival program demonstrated how Melbourne is enriched by multiculturalism.

Guests were mesmerised by different customs as they sipped sumptuous tannins in the Global Garden on the River Terrace. They learnt about the art of Japanese tea making, tried Ata Ethiopian and Vietnamese coffee, sewed aprons with beautiful global fabrics and got their turban tied.



Japanese tea ceremony in the Global Garden at Victoria's Multicultural Festival, March 2019



Iaki at Victoria's Multicultural Festival, March 2019

New to the program in 2019, chefs took to the World Kitchen to prepare delicious traditional dishes from Iran, Colombia, Syria and Japan.

Kids of all ages enjoyed a range of fun, free activities including global crafts, like Deshani Peg Doll making and Tamanna Mandela drawing, Indigenous storytelling from Kirsten Bonds Culture Crate, face-painting and Rolling Circus workshops at the kids' zone.

The sports zone featured Victoria's favourite sports with AFL Victoria, Melbourne Football Club and ICC T20 World Cup 2020 offering activities for all ages. Visitors met AFL players, collected free tickets to the Welcome Game and had photos taken with the ICC T20 World Cup trophies.

Australian rapper Dallas Woods headlined the main stage before ex-Melbourne Football Club player turned rhythm guitarist Russell 'Robbo' Robertson performed some good old-fashioned rock music ahead of Culture Waves.



AFL Victoria Sports Zone at Victoria's Multicultural Festival, March 2019



The crowd at Culture Waves, March 2019

Culture Waves

A free music concert showcasing the multicultural sounds of acclaimed young artists, Culture Waves celebrates how cultural diversity is influencing Victoria's local music scene.

Held on the main stage at Federation Square right after the festival, the 2019 concert featured performances from Indigenous Australian rapper, dancer and artist Baker Boy, up-and-coming future-soul and R&B singer/songwriter Kaiit, and soul singer/songwriter Adrian Eagle.

Primary School Film Competition

This year, the VMC asked primary schools to show us what multiculturalism means to them as part of the Primary School Film Competition. Students from prep to grade six produced a range of short films exploring the theme *This is what a Victorian looks like*.

The competition culminated in a presentation ceremony featuring the winning and shortlisted films as part of Victoria's Multicultural Festival.

A range of school and family groups attended to support the winning and runner-up students, who were presented with prizes and certificates from the VMC.

The winning films were on display at a special temporary exhibition in the Discovery Centre at the Immigration Museum in March 2019.

2019 WINNERS

- ▶ **PREP–GRADE 1 WINNER:** Eamon from South Melbourne Primary School
- ▶ **GRADE 2–4 WINNER:** Al-Taqwa College
- ▶ **GRADE 2–4 RUNNER UP:** Pancharlie from St Paul's Primary School
- ▶ **GRADE 5–6 WINNER:** Canterbury Primary School
- ▶ **GRADE 5–6 RUNNER UP:** Chandler Park Primary School

STRENGTHENING OUR COMMUNITY

OBJECTIVE 8 Promote the social, cultural and economic benefits of diversity.

OBJECTIVE 9 Promote the rights and responsibilities of citizenship as a unifying force that strengthens our diverse multicultural community.

Regional Advisory Councils

The Commission receives regular advice, information and local intelligence from its eight Regional Advisory Councils across the whole of Victoria.

Council members are the VMC's eyes and ears on the ground, keeping the VMC and the Victorian Government informed about the systemic issues affecting our state's multicultural communities. The VMC held 27 council meetings in 2018/19 with each council being chaired by a VMC Commissioner.

The VMC's council members are volunteers selected through a public expression-of-interest process. Our council members reflect Victoria's diversity, with 160 council members currently representing 40 different cultural backgrounds and including local community members, service providers, local business owners and local government representatives. Each council is a unique opportunity and platform for communities to directly provide information to government.

The VMC gratefully acknowledges the contributions, advice and commitment of its Regional Advisory Council members and their unwavering voluntary service in representing their communities and ensuring that community voices are heard. The large number of current and previous council members who have been awarded for their services to multicultural communities is testament to the quality of advice and commitment of council members generally.

For a full list of current Regional Advisory Council members, please see Appendix IV.

Community conversations

Through more than 1,000 Regional Advisory Council member conversations across the year, the VMC identified and discussed potential community-based solutions relating to employment, education, settlement and citizenship, social inclusion and isolation, access to public services, youth, transport, aged care and mental health.

Council members identified the intersectional nature and impact of systemic issues highlighting how positive approaches and inclusive language and policies can facilitate positive outcomes that contribute to the social, economic and political life of Victoria.



Northern and Western Metropolitan Regional Advisory Council meeting, November 2017



Premier's Iftar Dinner, May 2019

The councils are also a useful forum for other organisations and government bodies to engage with local multicultural communities. For example, Victoria Police representatives regularly attend council meetings to share valuable information and listen to community perspectives which fosters an ongoing two-way exchange. The Victorian Ombudsman's Office, Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation (via Gamblers Help) and Department of Education and Training also attended meetings this year to engage directly with communities and provide details of their services. The councils provide opportunities for members and communities at a local and regional level to exchange information, increase intercultural understanding, develop networks and build solid and ongoing trusting relationships that bring communities together and create community harmony.

Council members share information from council meetings to increase their own communities' awareness and understanding of the vast number of Victorian Government and non-government programs and services and how to access these services.

Presentations from the Australian Taxation Office and the Australian Electoral Office (AEO) resulted in outreach activities from both organisations. Members advised that the materials provided helped address misinformation and misunderstandings relating to tax matters and clearly explained requirements and entitlements. The AEO outreach in Nhill resulted in increased community understanding of the voting process and a significant increase in Karen community voting levels.

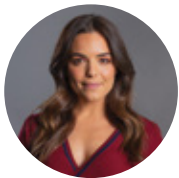
The VMC provides council members with regular updates regarding relevant government policy, programs and services, as well as information about engagement and employment opportunities for communities that they can distribute throughout their networks. Council meetings and consultations provide essential intel to assist the VMC to fulfil its legislative function to advocate for and support multicultural communities.

Challenging divisive narratives

In the face of increasing hostility towards racial and cultural diversity across the state, the VMC developed the Ambassadors for Multiculturalism campaign to shine a light on the positive contributions that multicultural Victorians have made across the sport, entertainment, food and business.

The campaign aimed to challenge divisive narratives around multiculturalism that are threatening Victoria's social cohesion by raising awareness of the benefits of diversity and reaffirming our collective sense of pride in cultural heritage and encouraging others to share their stories.

Profiling the multicultural stories of five ambassadors, the campaign was a huge success, reaching more than 14.5 million people through editorial coverage and more than three million people on social media.



OLYMPIA VALANCE

Olympia is an Australian actor and model and has become one of the country's most recognisable young stars. She was born in Victoria in

a culturally diverse family, with her father's Serbian heritage and her mother's Greek-Australian heritage. Olympia has been heavily influenced by her late-grandfather, Dimitri Gogos, who founded Australia's largest Greek-Australian newspaper Neos Kosmos and was well-recognised and celebrated for his work in shaping and empowering the Australian-Greek community.



LARRY KESTELMAN

Larry is a recognisable business personality with a strong presence across industries including sport, property and telecommunications.

Born in Ukraine, Larry lived in Italy before relocating with his parents to Australia in the 1970s. From a young age, Larry witnessed his parents' cultural challenges integrating into Australian society and the workforce. As a businessman, Larry is a well-known advocate for diversity and multiculturalism in the workforce.



DARCY VESCIO

Darcy is a household name within the AFL Women's league, playing for the Carlton Football Club. Born outside of Wangaratta in Victoria,

her parents are second generation migrants – a mother with Chinese heritage and a father with Italian heritage. Darcy grew up on a paddock with her Nonna and Nonno, being heavily influenced by her country roots and her Italian elders. Along with her sportsmanship, she is well-known for her skill and humour, as well as her advocacy towards bettering gender equality and diversity.



JACK RIEWOLDT

Jack is a premiership player for the Richmond Football Club in the AFL. Born in Tasmania to second generation migrants of German

heritage, he moved to Melbourne at the age of 18. As a team member at the Richmond Football Club for twelve years, Jack has seen and experienced firsthand how multiculturalism in Victoria has evolved. With his recognisable personality and strong community of loyal fans in Victoria, Jack strives to inspire others to be empowered by and celebrate our differences.



KAREN MARTINI

Karen is an accomplished chef, author, Melbourne restaurateur and well-known Australian TV personality. Born in Greensborough,

Victoria, with an English-Irish mother and a Tunisian-Italian father, Karen's father was a first-generation migrant, experiencing multicultural integration into the Australian-Italian community. Karen's love for cooking is connected to her childhood memories of her grandmother's Italian cooking, along with her mum's Australian-English meals and she enjoys learning and finding inspiration in cuisines from all around the world.

ENCOURAGING COMMUNITY SERVICE

OBJECTIVE 10 Promote community service as a principle that builds a stronger society.

Recognising excellence in community service

Victoria's Multicultural Awards for Excellence honour extraordinary people and organisations who have dedicated their lives to creating a Victoria where everyone can belong.

The 17th annual awards recognised more than 60 individuals and organisations at a special ceremony at Government House. Recipients ranged from professionals to volunteers, recent migrants and refugees to established Victorians, each acknowledged for their contribution to strengthening multiculturalism in Victoria.

The awards were once again delivered in partnership with the Department of Education and Training and Victoria Police across 10 categories:

- ▶ Premier's Award for Community Harmony
- ▶ Emerging Leadership in Multiculturalism
- ▶ Community Innovation Award
- ▶ Youth Award
- ▶ Media Award
- ▶ Multicultural Business Award
- ▶ Government and Civic Leadership Award
- ▶ Education and Early Childhood Award
- ▶ Police Awards
- ▶ Award for Meritorious Service to the Community

Building the capacity of multicultural community leaders

The Multicultural Champions Program acknowledged Victorians who, through their community service, have been instrumental in breaking down barriers between diverse communities and have promoted intercultural understanding and the benefits of multiculturalism.

Launched in January 2018, the year-long program showcased the positive stories of culturally diverse communities through the work of 18 established and emerging community leaders.

Through the program, the VMC provided leadership development, engagement and media opportunities to build their capacity and take their work to the next level.

2018 MULTICULTURAL CHAMPIONS

- ▶ Ajit Singh Chauhan
- ▶ Anand Shome
- ▶ Ann Foley
- ▶ Barbara Brown
- ▶ Batul Gulani
- ▶ Caterina Revrenna
- ▶ Chap Chow
- ▶ Deepak Vinayak
- ▶ Gary Li
- ▶ John McKinnin
- ▶ Judy Tang
- ▶ Mariam Issa
- ▶ Neeraj Nanda
- ▶ Parsu Sharma-Luitai
- ▶ Saara Sabbagh
- ▶ Sambo Meng
- ▶ Sam Feng
- ▶ Sopea Sao
- ▶ Youhorn Chea

For a full list of Victoria's Multicultural Awards for Excellence 2018 recipients, please refer to Appendix V.



APPENDIX I. MULTICULTURAL CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE GROUP MEMBERS 2018/19

- ▶ American Chamber of Commerce in Australia
- ▶ Argentina Chamber of Commerce
- ▶ Australia - Iran Chamber of Commerce and Industries
- ▶ Australia Africa Chamber of Commerce
- ▶ Australia Arab Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- ▶ Australia British Chamber of Commerce
- ▶ Australia China Business Council-Victoria
- ▶ Australia Democratic Republic of Congo Business Council
- ▶ Australia India Business Council
- ▶ Australia Indonesia Business Council
- ▶ Australia Israel Chamber of Commerce
- ▶ Australia Japan Society of Victoria
- ▶ Australia Korea Business Council
- ▶ Australia Latin America Business Council
- ▶ Australia Lebanon Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- ▶ Australia Malaysia Business Council
- ▶ Australia Singapore Chamber of Commerce
- ▶ Australia Sri Lanka Council Inc.
- ▶ Australia Thailand Business Council
- ▶ Australia Ukraine Chamber of Commerce
- ▶ Australia Zimbabwe Business Council
- ▶ Australian American Association (Victoria)
- ▶ Australian Croatian Chamber of Commerce
- ▶ Australian Hubei Chamber of Commerce
- ▶ Australian Lithuania Business Council
- ▶ Australian Macedonian Chamber of Commerce
- ▶ Australian Turkish Business Council
- ▶ Australian Turkish Businessmen and Industry
- ▶ Brazil Chamber of Commerce
- ▶ Chile Chamber of Commerce
- ▶ Chinese Chamber of Commerce of Victoria
- ▶ French Australia Chamber of Commerce
- ▶ German Australian Chamber of Industry and Commerce
- ▶ Hellenic Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- ▶ Irish Australian Chamber of Commerce
- ▶ Italian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- ▶ Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- ▶ Multicultural Business Ministerial Council
- ▶ Netherlands Chamber of Commerce Australia
- ▶ Peru Chamber of Commerce
- ▶ Polish Chamber of Commerce Australia
- ▶ Victoria Croatian Chamber of Commerce

APPENDIX II. COMMUNITY SUPPORT FUND 2018/19 RECIPIENTS

OPPORTUNITY	RECIPIENT	GRANT
35th Anniversary and Australia Day Celebration	Federation of Greek Elderly Citizen Clubs of Melbourne and Victoria Inc	\$10,000
African Women's Leadership Forum	Somali Women Development Association Inc.	\$2,000
ARPAN – Odissi Dance Performance	Sam Goraya	\$1,000
Chin National Day 2019	Australia Zo Organisation (AZO) Inc.	\$2,000
Cultural Kings and Queens	Te Hononga O Nga Iwi	\$5,100
Culture Kings and Queens – an intercultural event between Pasifika, African Dias	Footprint Enterprises Inc.	\$2,500
Culture Kings and Queens – an intercultural event between Pasifika, African Dias	South Sudanese Australia Youth United	\$6,500
Dinka Community Cultural Day	Dinka Community Union of Victoria Inc.	\$8,500
Flourishing Families: Building Healthy & Resilient Communities Through Prevention	Green Crescent Australia	\$3,000
Intercultural Leadership Program (I-LeaP)	Victoria University	\$10,000
Kofi Annan Memorial Service	Ghana Association of Victoria	\$2,000
Korea Week Festival 2018	Melbourne Korean Cultural Foundation	\$5,200
Making Diversity Great Again	Swinburne University of Technology	\$10,000
Mid-Autumn Festival and Volunteers Awards	U3A Chinese in Yarra	\$2,000
Multicultural Golf & Bowls Challenge - Women in Sport	Churchill-Waverley Golf and Bowls Club	\$1,500



The crowd at Victoria's Multicultural Festival, March 2019

OPPORTUNITY	RECIPIENT	GRANT
Polish School program	The Edmund Strzelecki Melbourne Polish School Inc	\$10,000
Somali Youth Music and Arts Program	United Through Football Inc.	\$5,000
South Sudanese Community Celebration 2018	Federation of South Sudanese Associations in Victoria	\$10,000
Strengthening Diaspora Voices	Diaspora Action Australia	\$5,000
Taranta Festival	Federazione Pugliese D'Australia	\$2,000
The 3rd Nelson Mandela Annual Lecture delivered by The Hon Julia Gillard	Nelson Mandela Day Commemorative Committee Inc	\$5,000
The Ethiopian Annual Soccer Tournament	Ethiopian Community Association in Victoria	\$5,000
Ueda Shogen Solo Exhibition	Lesley Kehoe Galleries	\$2,500
Ukrainian Arts & Culture Organisational Support	Ukrainian Arts & Culture Inc	\$500
Ukrainian Women's Association – St Albans Organisational Support	Ukrainian Women's Association St Albans	\$500
VAHAN Community Forum on World AIDS Day	Victorian African Health Action Network	\$2,200
Western region diverse women support	Unity Care Australia	\$5,000
Whitehorse Community Welcome Lunch 2018	Joiningthedots International (Victoria)	\$1,372
Women Acknowledging Women	Engenda Ltd	\$5,000
Youth Leadership Camp	Youth Activating Youth	\$5,000
Youth Link	African Advancement Victoria	\$7,500

APPENDIX III. MULTIFAITH ADVISORY GROUP MEMBERS 2018/19

- ▶ Anglican Diocese of Melbourne
- ▶ Baha'i Community of Victoria
- ▶ Rabbinical Council of Victoria
- ▶ Buddhist Council of Victoria
- ▶ Coptic Orthodox Diocese of Melbourne
- ▶ Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria
- ▶ Faith Communities Council of Victoria
- ▶ Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia
- ▶ Hindu Community Council of Victoria
- ▶ Hindu Society of Victoria
- ▶ Islamic Council of Victoria
- ▶ Jewish Community Council of Victoria
- ▶ Lutheran Church of Australia
- ▶ Presbyterian Church of Victoria
- ▶ Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne
- ▶ Russian Orthodox Church
- ▶ Salvation Army
- ▶ Sikh Interfaith Council of Victoria
- ▶ The Interfaith Centre of Melbourne
- ▶ Uniting Church in Australia, Synod of Victoria and Tasmania
- ▶ Victorian Council of Churches
- ▶ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization



Day of Prayer for drought affected farmers, September 2018

APPENDIX IV. REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS 2017–19

Barwon South West

- ▶ Danielle Parker
- ▶ Luba Pryslak*
- ▶ Graham Banks
- ▶ Htoo Kolo
- ▶ Mutheinchri Ra
- ▶ Dr Neha Singh
- ▶ Niraj Karanjeet
- ▶ Somayeh Shirzad
- ▶ Matin Ghayour-Minaie*
- ▶ Andrew Alexander*

* appointed 21 June 2018

Hume

- ▶ Charlene Norton***
- ▶ Sarmed Yassin*
- ▶ Susan Ingleton
- ▶ Betul Tuna
- ▶ Matthew Walker
- ▶ Barbara Brown
- ▶ Carol McQuade
- ▶ Mayssa Powell**
- ▶ Nivanka De Silva**
- ▶ Omeni Ndlovu
- ▶ Rashidi Sumaili

- ▶ Rhonda Chrisanthou
- ▶ Lorna Gillespie
- ▶ Dr Apollo Nsubuga-Kyobe

* appointed 21 June 2018

** resigned (Mayssa – 16/1/2018;
Nivanka – 23/1/2018)

*** currently on maternity leave

Grampians

- ▶ Frances Salenga
- ▶ Eddie Nsanzimana
- ▶ Barry Petrovski
- ▶ Julie Pettett
- ▶ Shiree Pilkinton
- ▶ Chez Dichiera
- ▶ John Millington
- ▶ Manzoor Mian
- ▶ Meeta Narsi
- ▶ Mona Hatwal
- ▶ Andrew Horvat
- ▶ Muhammad Raza Hussaini
- ▶ Ambili Unni

Gippsland

- ▶ Cate Chaiyot***
- ▶ Heidi Losic-Clarke
- ▶ Lisa Sinha

- ▶ Farhat Firdous
- ▶ John Shaban
- ▶ Dr Christine Lee
- ▶ Murray Lobley
- ▶ Peter Kaka
- ▶ Soula Kanellopoulos
- ▶ Yumna Ahmed
- ▶ Jason Lee*

* appointed 21 June 2018

*** currently on maternity leave

Loddon Mallee

- ▶ Steven Abbott
- ▶ Kaye Graves
- ▶ Kate McInnes
- ▶ George Mudford
- ▶ Dean Wickham
- ▶ Susan Denny
- ▶ Nay Chee Aung
- ▶ Darren John Brown
- ▶ Dr Antonio Alessi
- ▶ Moustafa Al-Rawi
- ▶ Abhishek Awasthi
- ▶ Zahir Azimi

Eastern Metropolitan

- ▶ Michael Smith
- ▶ Dr Noel Stonehouse
- ▶ Tina Stathopoulos
- ▶ Edwin Town
- ▶ Rufina Chan
- ▶ Dr Helen Forbes-Mewett
- ▶ James Thangman
- ▶ Mingjie (Roger) Li
- ▶ Naishadh Gadani
- ▶ Ra'id Alhamami
- ▶ Dr Raju Adhikari
- ▶ Gergis Ayoub
- ▶ Sabaratnam Sundaramoorthy
- ▶ Shameela Essop
- ▶ Siva Sivagnanam
- ▶ Alan Vanbiaksanga
- ▶ Bright Chinganya
- ▶ Bwe Thay
- ▶ Chipo Juru
- ▶ Marta Marot
- ▶ Viji Tangirala
- ▶ Wesley Bawia
- ▶ Dr Brigitte Lambert

Southern Metropolitan

- ▶ Monique O'Keeffe
- ▶ Stephen Thomas
- ▶ Tomasa Morales
- ▶ Selba Gondoza Luka
- ▶ Hannibal Khoury
- ▶ Eva Hussain
- ▶ Grissel Walmaggia
- ▶ Kasuni Mendis
- ▶ Komi Jesse Bana
- ▶ Mata Tuerei Mani
- ▶ Nizar El Hajj

- ▶ Nyadieng Luk
- ▶ Patricia Kimtia
- ▶ Paul Saluni
- ▶ Rumi Commons
- ▶ Shashi Kochhar
- ▶ Weda Mohseni
- ▶ Susan Levkovski
- ▶ Alba Chilakhtine
- ▶ Alexander Kats
- ▶ Andrew Gai
- ▶ Carlo Spada
- ▶ Edith Campbell
- ▶ Kwobdoch Kwajakwan
- ▶ Girish Madhavan Pillai

North West Metropolitan

- ▶ Cristina Del Frate
- ▶ Gemma Boucher
- ▶ Ross Barnett
- ▶ Peter Mousafertadis
- ▶ Lisa Ashton
- ▶ Amna Iqbal
- ▶ Ali Ahmed
- ▶ Dalal Sleiman
- ▶ Celeste Shambrook
- ▶ Diana Noor
- ▶ Kathryn Bowden
- ▶ Louie Josef
- ▶ Paul Seidl
- ▶ Amrita Gurung
- ▶ Shanthi Antony
- ▶ Silvia Renda
- ▶ Tenenet Taye
- ▶ Tim Lo Surdo
- ▶ Tony Luo
- ▶ Amer Hagos
- ▶ Janetta Ziino

- ▶ Jude Ediae
- ▶ Dawood Sammour
- ▶ Puneet Gulati
- ▶ Ragai Abdelfadiel
- ▶ Anam Javed
- ▶ Mustafa Najib
- ▶ Marleine Raffoul
- ▶ Tony Ball
- ▶ Batul Gulani
- ▶ Biong Biong
- ▶ Jamad Hersi
- ▶ Monica Raizada
- ▶ Erhan Eryegit
- ▶ Farooq Dar
- ▶ Dr Gurdev Rattan
- ▶ Ibrahim Hajj
- ▶ Iqbal Hossain
- ▶ Joe Morizzi
- ▶ Kot Monoah*
- ▶ Lorika Kadriu
- ▶ Dr Monica Zaman
- ▶ Monica Forson
- ▶ Orlando Gibson
- ▶ Pullareddy Baddam
- ▶ Dr Ritesh Chugh
- ▶ Sunny Saksham Katyal
- ▶ Suresh Ramachandraiah
- ▶ Tenzin Khangsar
- ▶ Zufaidah Juri
- ▶ Virendra Kumar Khatana
- ▶ Gurpreet Verma
- ▶ Robert Ring Aduer*

* appointed 21 June 2018

** resigned 2/2/2018



APPENDIX V. VICTORIA'S MULTICULTURAL AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE 2018 RECIPIENTS

Premier's Award for Community Harmony

Tara Rajkumar OAM

Tara Rajkumar OAM is an artistic director, choreographer, teacher and performer of Indian classical dance. She has fostered cross-cultural awareness through hundreds of lectures, workshops and performances at schools and

community events throughout metropolitan and regional Australia, including curating South Asian and Aboriginal cultural performances for the Light in Winter Festival at Federation Square. She has also helped children of Indian origin who have been adopted by Australian parents to stay connected to their heritage through dance.

Emerging Leadership in Multiculturalism Award

Nancy Loomba

Nancy Loomba has been actively involved in events that bring the community together and has shown great leadership in promoting multiculturalism. She is a multicultural ambassador for the AFL and Cricket Victoria and has worked with Victoria Police and Leadership Victoria bringing together young leaders from diverse communities to address issues of disengagement and to celebrate diversity. As Media Manager of the Brother and Sisters Foundation, she also initiated a program in collaboration with Positive Partnership to target the stigma around autism in South Asian communities in Victoria.

HIGHLY COMMENDED: Preeti Daga, Bwe Thay



Guests at Victoria's Multicultural Awards for Excellence ceremony at Government House, September 2018

Community Innovation Award

City of Melbourne – ‘Act of Translation’

‘Act of Translation’ was a theatre project involving local and international students from around the world, including China, Iraq, India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Vietnam, Brazil and Colombia. The project aimed to challenge people’s perceptions of international students, culminating with the launch of a documentary about the experience. The works were performed throughout Melbourne to more than 600 people, at the Melbourne Writers Festival, Library at The Dock, RMIT University and the Immigration Museum.

HIGHLY COMMENDED: Bonbeach Life Saving Club

Youth Award

Sam Shlansky

Sam Shlansky has created many opportunities for multicultural engagement between Indonesian students and locals at Monash University. As president of Australia Indonesia Youth Association, he

worked closely with members to identify young women with leadership potential and championed them to take on larger roles. He also helped the group pilot regional outreach by running the Festival Bahasa dan Budaya Inodnesia in Warrnambool. He plays a pivotal role in the cross-cultural education Marco Polo Project, engaging new partners and expanding its services into regional areas.

HIGHLY COMMENDED: Elvis Martin, Sajda Yasmin Yakub

Media Award

Benjamin Millar

Maribyrnong Weekly journalist Benjamin Millar has been a strong voice of reason in reporting on ‘African gangs’, highlighting the many crimes he had covered over the years, and how few of them were committed by African-Australians and discussing how crime can be reported without citing race. Members of the African-Australian community have indicated that Millar’s work was a turning point in the debate and an important intervention

in what was fast becoming a damaging narrative.

HIGHLY COMMENDED: Eugenia Pavlopoulou

Multicultural Business Award

Victoria University

Victoria University is renowned for its culturally diverse student body and staff and its commitment to maximising opportunities for people from multicultural backgrounds to engage in tertiary education, industry and the broader community. The university has launched a detailed Cultural Diversity Strategy to advance and promote multiculturalism with initiatives that provide multicultural mentoring, support refugee and asylum seeker students and celebrate diversity.

HIGHLY COMMENDED: Billard Leece Partnership

Government and Civic Leadership Award

Moreland City Council

Moreland is one of the few councils in Australia to adopt a Social Cohesion Plan. The plan is a result of years of research the council has undertaken to identify priority communities which are at risk of exclusion and discrimination that could lead to social problems. The council is supporting Fawcner Neighbourhood House to ensure marginalised community are included and have ample employment opportunities. The council has also funded the Stepping Stones Program, which helps refugees and disadvantaged



Tsebin Tchen with David Man Kit Yu from Buddha’s Light International Association of Victoria at Victoria’s Multicultural Awards for Excellence, September 2018

migrants to start small businesses.

HIGHLY COMMENDED: Level Crossing Removal Authority – Training for the Future Program

Education and Early Childhood Award

WINNER – EARLY CHILDHOOD:
The Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture Early Years Program

Also known as Foundation House, the organisation provides services to people from refugee backgrounds in Victoria who have experienced torture or other traumatic events in their country of origin or while fleeing those countries. The Early Years Program works to improve outcomes for children and families from refugee backgrounds by supporting Victorian early years services to work effectively for and with families of refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds.

WINNER – SCHOOL EDUCATION:
Croydon Primary School

Croydon Primary School is committed to improving the health and wellbeing of its community of predominately Burmese refugees: Falam, Karen, Zomi, and Hakha Chin. The school employs a dedicated wellbeing and refugee coordinator, multicultural aides for each language group and two teachers from refugee backgrounds. In consultation with students and parents, it provides programs and services that address priority needs. The school is sharing its experiences across the wider school community to build the intercultural capabilities of educators, teachers and support staff working in all schools, and

improve the educational and settlement needs of communities from migrant and refugee backgrounds.

Police Awards

POLICE ANNUAL MULTICULTURAL AWARD

- ▶ Senior Sergeant Marilyn Ross APM
- ▶ Senior Constable Carol Williams
- ▶ Acting Senior Sergeant Adam Davy
- ▶ Senior Constable Rebecca Millin
- ▶ Senior Constable Matt Walker
- ▶ Senior Sergeant Efti Anastasiadis
- ▶ Inspector Clive Williams
- ▶ Senior Sergeant Eugene Kontos
- ▶ Lisa Gray

POLICE COMMUNITY EXEMPLARY AWARD

- ▶ New Recruits - Geelong Police Youth Consultations
- ▶ North West Metro Muslim Reference Group
- ▶ Phulvinderjit Singh Grewal
- ▶ Sam Atukorala

POLICE MULTICULTURAL MEDIA AWARD

- ▶ First Constable Kenny Lin

Award for Meritorious Service to the Community

ORGANISATIONS

- ▶ All Saints
- ▶ Australian Hazara Women's Friendship Network

- ▶ Buddha's Light International Association of Victoria
- ▶ Diversitat - Geelong Ethnic Communities Council
- ▶ Loddon Campaspe Multicultural Services
- ▶ Multicultural Arts Victoria
- ▶ South Asia Times
- ▶ Whittlesea Community Connections

INDIVIDUALS – PAID WORK

- ▶ Ai Yun Liu
- ▶ Alope Kumar
- ▶ Bassir Qadiri
- ▶ Nagamuthu Ramalingam Wickiramasingham
- ▶ Yohana Jury

INDIVIDUALS – VOLUNTARY

- ▶ Bandu Dissanayake
- ▶ Bom Yonzon
- ▶ Chandana Imbulana
- ▶ Christina Despoteris
- ▶ Deepti Alurkar
- ▶ Dilkie (Dilrukshie) Perera
- ▶ Heidi Shiroma Vilasinie Linthotage Fernando
- ▶ Leng Chaiwatanatorn
- ▶ Nalin Sharda
- ▶ Naureen Choudhry
- ▶ Jazeer Nijamudeen
- ▶ Nurten Kim Hasan
- ▶ Puneet Gulati
- ▶ Rohit Kumar
- ▶ Said A Said
- ▶ Stephen Chew
- ▶ Uma Vijai
- ▶ Van Tu Tran
- ▶ Wendy Brown
- ▶ Xiao Mei Zhou



The crowd at Culture Waves, March 2019

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Annual report 2018-19

The 2018-19 Annual Report covers the core work of the Victorian Multicultural Commission (VMC) and its achievements within the context of its objectives and functions, as outlined in the *Multicultural Victoria Act 2011*.

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