



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
VICTORIA

VICTORIAN AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR
Tuesday 14 November 2023

Acknowledgments

The Honourable Ben Carroll MP, Deputy Premier of Victoria, *representing the Premier*
John Foreman OAM, Chair, and **Mark Fraser AO CVO**, Chief Executive Officer, National
Australia Day Council

Assessment Selection Panel Representatives

Australian of the Year Alumni

2024 Victorian Australian of the Year Nominees

Distinguished guests

I begin by acknowledging the Traditional Owners of the unceded lands on which this building stands – the Wurundjeri people – and pay my respects to their Elders, past and present.

It is a pleasure to represent Her Excellency Professor the Honourable Margaret Gardner AC, Governor of Victoria, this evening for the announcement of the 2024 Victorian Australian of the Year Awards.

Since 1960, these awards have recognised and celebrated the very best of Victoria and its people.

Each year, the nominees and recipients have showcased the rich diversity in our community and the multitude of ways in which Victorians contribute to our State and our community.

Our Local Heroes demonstrate the positive impact individuals can have on a grassroots level.

Young Australians represent the passion and initiative of youth when tackling the problems of our time.

Our Seniors highlight the insight and wisdom gained from a lifetime of experience.

And all of the Victorian Australians of the year illustrate the important work being done by people across the State.

It's important that we recognise the work of Victorians from all walks of life as their contributions often begin from their homes, their workplaces and community groups. It is here that real change begins.

Previous recipients at these awards have brought new perspectives and action on issues and challenges from family violence to homelessness, disability, and education.

And, they have used those conversations to create new programs and initiatives to address the shortcomings they see in their own communities, often to ensure the most vulnerable Victorians are not left behind.

Perhaps channelling Paul Kelly's well-known anthem, Victoria's 2023 Victorian Australian of the Year, Dr Angraj Khillan, described the motivation for his work as starting "*from [a] small little thing.*"

From there, the Health Awareness Society of Australia has indeed grown, addressing the cultural and linguistic barriers that inhibit culturally and linguistically diverse Australians from accessing medical care.

This year's nominees and recipients demonstrate a similar approach. Often from small beginnings, they have made important change that affects the Victorian community.

I'm conscious that much of this would not have been possible without the support of many of you in the room today. I would particularly like to acknowledge the family, friends and colleagues who have supported each of our nominees and made their achievements possible.

On behalf of all Victorians, I would like to thank and congratulate each of the 2024 nominees. For working hard to make our State a better, more open and supportive place to live.

Thank you also, to the selection committee for once again taking on the difficult task of selecting recipients. And to the category sponsors for making ceremonies like these possible.

I hope you enjoy this evening's festivities and are inspired to nominate people in your own life.