



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
VICTORIA

## **ORDER OF AUSTRALIA BRAVERY AWARDS**

### **Wednesday 18 October 2023**

#### **Acknowledgments**

**The Honourable Anthony Carbines MP**, Minister for Police, Minister for Crime Prevention and Minister for Racing, *representing the Premier*

**Kate Houghton PSM**, Secretary, Department of Justice and Community Safety

**Shane Patton APM**, Chief Commissioner, Victoria Police

**Gavin Freeman AFSM**, Commissioner, Fire Rescue Victoria

**Rick Nugent APM**, Emergency Management Commissioner

**Michelle McLean**, representing the Chair of the Country Fire Authority

**Keith Banks BM**, representing the President of the Australian Bravery Association

#### **Recipients**

#### **Distinguished guests**

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

It is a great privilege to welcome you all here to Government House.

These are the first Order of Australia Bravery Awards that I've presided over as Governor, and it is a privilege to have the opportunity to recognise the brave and selfless acts of so many of you today.

Today's event is not simply an awards ceremony but an act of remembrance of the challenging, and, for some, traumatic experiences that led you to be here with us.

This ceremony will be bittersweet for those of you who are being recognised and celebrated for your brave actions but also being reminded of who could not be saved.

When these awards were introduced as part of the broader Australian honours system in 1975, they were created to recognise and celebrate the many courageous and compassionate people that live within our community.

And as we've just heard, each of you demonstrated bravery and selflessness in challenging and distressing circumstances.

It's important that we celebrate Victorians who – when faced with dangerous, confronting and often life-threatening situations – rush to help others in danger or attempt to prevent it rather than fleeing or standing back.

These awards show us that Victoria is home to caring, compassionate people who will willingly put their lives at risk for the benefit of others.

They also demonstrate a desire within the community to express our thanks and support for each of you as you deal with the experiences and challenges that flow from your courageous acts.

It is common for nominees and recipients to insist their actions were unremarkable and that they shouldn't be referred to as heroes or role models. They say, *I am an ordinary person who did what anyone would.*

Not everyone would or does take the heroic action outlined today. Those actions set a positive example for all of us.

On behalf of all Victorians, I commend and thank each of you for your bravery and for your commitment to this community.

I hope you enjoy your time here today at Government House.