



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
VICTORIA

2023 VICTORIAN PRIDE AWARDS

Friday 15 March 2024

Acknowledgments

The Honourable Steve Dimopoulos, Minister for Environment, Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events, Minister for Outdoor Recreation.

Julian Hill, Federal Member for Bruce.

Aiv Puglielli, Member for North-Eastern Metro.

Peta McCammon, Secretary, Department of Family, Fairness and Housing

Ro Allen, Commissioner, Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission

Dr Judy Tang, Commissioner, Victorian Multicultural Commission

Andrew Shepherd, President, GLOBE Victoria

Award finalists

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's a pleasure to join you this evening for the 2023 Victorian Pride Awards.

It is thanks to the hard work of many activists and organisers, over many years, that we are able to gather here today and celebrate leaders and allies of the LGBTQIA+ community.

The major movement for LGBTQIA+ rights is usually dated to 24 June 1978, when the first Mardi Gras was held in Sydney.

Of course, the impact of the community in Victoria has a longer history.

Australia's first LGBTQIA+ rights organisation – the Daughters of Bilitis – was formed in Melbourne in 1969.

Decades later, in 2016, Brotherboys and Sistergirls from across the country, met on Wurundjeri land to participate in the first national event for trans and gender diverse Aboriginal people.

And organisations like Australian Marriage Equality – were formed and successfully campaigned for a change in Australia’s Marriage Act in 2017.

Which brings me to this evening’s awards. For a decade, these awards have recognised and celebrated the work of organisations and individuals that benefit and unite LGBTQIA+ Victorians.

The struggle to gain and maintain rights has been long and there remain many places in the world that could not hold a celebration such as this one.

Reflecting on the progression of civil rights, writer and activist James Baldwin once said, *“It took many years...before I was able to walk on the earth as though I had the right to be here.”*

His words remind us that there is a journey for rights but also, for many, a journey to self-acceptance which is also not always an easy one.

Categories like Excellence in Small Business, Preventing Social Isolation and Outstanding Contribution to Sport, highlight the myriad of ways in which tonight’s nominees have contributed to their community.

It is important that we recognise their achievements, not only to congratulate them on the impact of their work, but to highlight the role they play in our broader society.

Thank you and congratulations to all of tonight’s nominees and winners.

To Globe Victoria and Andrew Shepherd for their ongoing commitment to the Pride Awards.

And to each of you for joining us tonight.