



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
VICTORIA

2025 VICTORIAN MULTICULTURAL AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE

Thursday 4 December 2025

Acknowledgments

Iwan Walters MP, Parliamentary Secretary for Multicultural Affairs, *representing the Minister for Multicultural Affairs*

Vivienne Nguyen AM, Chairperson, Victorian Multicultural Commission

Commissioner Mike Bush CNZM, Chief Commissioner, Victoria Police

Commissioners of the Victorian Public Service

The Honourable Jenny Mikakos, Former Minister for Health

Nominators, Sponsors and Panel Judges of the Multicultural Awards for Excellence

Award recipients

Distinguished guests

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

I want to acknowledge any other Elders with us today.

And I want to welcome everyone – including those watching the live stream – to the 24th annual celebration of the Victorian Multicultural Awards for Excellence.

In many ways, these Awards come at the beginning of a new era for our state.

Let me explain why.

Three weeks ago, the Premier, the Minister for Treaty, and the Co-Chairs of the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria, came here – to Government House – and signed the Statewide Treaty.

It was an historic moment:

The first Treaty between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians in any jurisdiction in the Commonwealth of Australia.

It is important to understand that the Treaty is not just an agreement on the terms upon which we can all live together as one people.

The Treaty also heals the rupture that was begun with colonial settlement and dispossession.

It renews the promise of our great state as a place of diversity, equity and inclusion.

And it creates an opportunity for all Victorians to be united in diversity – as equal citizens in a place where everyone belongs.

Treaty is a new beginning.

Twenty-one days ago, the people of Victoria agreed to find better ways to live together – and that agreement, that promise, extends to all Victorians, ...

.. especially our Victorians drawn from many cultures across the world.

This state has always been a place of cultural diversity.

Indigenous Victorians spoke more than 30 languages before settlement.

And – ever since the Gold Rush – Victoria has always prospered from being open to new people and new ideas.

It might be said that that, apart from our First peoples, there is nothing more Victorian than a migrant.

Almost half of Victoria's population were either born overseas or have a parent born overseas.

That is why these Awards are so important.

These Awards are important because multiculturalism is one of the reasons Victorians can be open-minded and practical people; ...

.. the kind of people who would rather make progress a reality than talk about it as a possibility.

Our collective enlightenment, our realism, are gifts of our diversity; ...

.. because every wave of new Victorians deepens our understanding of the world beyond these shores – and thereby expands our possibilities and our horizons.

These Awards are an opportunity to celebrate the excellence that comes from diversity – and honour the champions of diversity.

Let me leave you with this thought.

In the last two weeks, I visited Malaysia and Indonesia.

The purpose of my trip was to promote Victoria as a partner of choice – and, make no mistake, our diversity is seen as an asset in South-East Asia.

It matters that almost one-in-three Victorians are born overseas.

It matters that our citizens come from 300 different cultural backgrounds, speak more than 290 languages and dialects, and follow almost 200 faiths.

It matters because our diversity makes Victoria a place where everyone is welcome, everyone belongs, and anyone can succeed.

And none of that would be possible without the Victorians in this room.

That's why tonight's celebration is so important.

Thank you.