



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
VICTORIA

2025 PREMIER'S VCE AWARDS

Tuesday 21 July 2026

Acknowledgments

The Honourable Ben Carroll MP, Deputy Premier, Minister for Education, Minister for WorkSafe and the TAC, Minister for Medical Research

Andrew Smith, Chief Executive Officer, Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority

Award recipients

Teachers and family members

Distinguished guests

I begin by acknowledging the Traditional Owners of the lands on which we meet, the Wurundjeri people, and pay my respects to their Elders, past and present.

It's a pleasure to represent Her Excellency Professor the Honourable Margaret Gardner, Governor of Victoria, at this year's Premier's VCE Awards ceremony.

To all the award recipients – congratulations.

You should feel incredibly proud of what you have achieved.

These awards recognise excellence. But they also recognise discipline, persistence and care.

A line often attributed to Aristotle challenges: "We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit."

And these awards recognise those habits too: the hours of work that others saw, and the many more hours that they did not.

...moments when theories were difficult to grasp...

...when facts were difficult to memorise...

...or when you thought there was no way you could get that assignment done.

And they celebrate, too, the people around you – your parents, families, and teachers who supported you, and the friends who helped keep you positive in those harder moments.

I imagine some of those people are in this room today.

Now, much has changed since my own graduation from high school.

The expectations placed on you are altogether different, and the speed at which you've already had to adapt to new ways of learning, connecting, and living is something my classmates and I never had to face in the way that you have.

But there are some things that haven't changed.

The proof of a good education is still not only about what you know.

It is about what you do with that knowledge.

As the philosopher John Dewey once wrote, "education is not preparation for life; education is life itself."

Learning allows you to better understand the world around you as you make your way through it.

It shapes your interests and values, the actions you take, and what you seek to learn next.

And since there is always more to learn, it is a process that never stops.

So, while your VCE studies have now come to an end, your education has not.

That doesn't mean you need to have your entire career path, or even your next steps, perfectly figured out right now.

But it does mean you have a responsibility to stay engaged and stay interested, and to give the same support and guidance that you received to those who will follow you.

It means carrying forward the habit of asking questions and of pushing through when the going gets tough.

And it means staying curious about the world around you, even as the world itself changes.

Because time goes more quickly than you think.

It is very easy to fall into the trap of always looking forward to the next hurdle, the next degree, the next job, and forgetting to celebrate what you've just achieved.

So, take a moment for yourselves and reflect on all that hard work and everything you've been through to get here today.

And if you take one piece of advice, let it be this:

Keep pushing yourself to learn something new every day, but at the same time make sure you enjoy yourselves along the way.

Because one moment you are taking exams, and the next thing you know, you are watching the next generation begin to make their own way in the world, with all the promise and possibility that lies ahead of them.

So, to all the recipients, I hope you have a great time this afternoon.

You should all be incredibly proud, and we are all so excited to see what comes next for you.

Thank you.