MESSAGE FROM THE GOVERNOR

The Victorian Multicultural Awards for Excellence recognise and celebrate the extraordinary contribution of a diverse array of Victorians to our vibrant and inclusive society.

Victoria has much to be proud of when it comes to multiculturalism. Collectively, we speak over 260 different languages and practise around 135 different faiths. We embrace different cultures from across the globe, and value the distinct contribution each culture makes to our broader community.

On behalf of all Victorians, I congratulate and thank each of the 2015 Award recipients for the work they do for the benefit of our entire State and I warmly welcome them, their friends and family to Government House.

The Hon. Linda Dessau AM
Governor of Victoria

MESSAGE FROM THE PREMIER

I am delighted to congratulate all the recipients of the 2015 Victorian Multicultural Awards for Excellence, for your outstanding contributions to Victoria’s multicultural society.

Since 2002, these annual Awards have recognised many remarkable achievements to support diversity, inclusion and cohesion in our community. We are very fortunate to have so many committed people and organisations working hard to maintain Victoria’s reputation as a world leader in multicultural affairs.

This year is no exception. The 2015 Award recipients have made significant contributions to support Victoria’s diverse communities to fully participate in society, and to maintain and celebrate their different cultures, languages and faiths.

On behalf of the Victorian Government, I congratulate you on your achievements; you are an inspiration to all Victorians.

The Hon. Daniel Andrews MP
Premier of Victoria
MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

Victoria is home to a rich diversity of cultures, languages and faiths. This diversity is one of our greatest strengths.

Victoria’s Multicultural Awards for Excellence are an important way for the Victorian Government and the Victorian Multicultural Commission to publicly acknowledge Victorians who embrace our diversity.

Now in their 14th year, these awards pay tribute to those individuals, communities and organisations who contribute to our successful multicultural and inclusive society.

I commend and congratulate all recipients for their hard work, dedicated service and achievements over the past year.

The Hon. Robin Scott MP
Minister for Multicultural Affairs

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRPERSON

On behalf of the Victorian Multicultural Commission, it is a great honour and pleasure to present Victoria’s Multicultural Awards for Excellence 2015.

I am delighted and encouraged by the wonderful array of passionate, talented people and organisations being recognised for their extraordinary contributions to their local communities, and to our state.

With recipients representing 22 different cultures, these awards highlight the depth and breadth of initiatives and programs that support and reinforce our strength as a multicultural community.

I extend my thanks to the nominators for taking the time to put forward so many deserving nominees. And most importantly, a very warm congratulations and a personal thank you to each and every recipient for their inspiring efforts in celebrating and promoting cultural diversity and harmony.

Helen Kapalos
Chairperson, Victorian Multicultural Commission
Recognising the achievements of a person or organisation who has demonstrated outstanding voluntary commitment to the service of Victoria’s multicultural community, promoted cultural diversity and improved community relations and programs for at least 10 years.

AWARD FOR MERITORIOUS SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY

INDIVIDUALS:

**DR RAJU ADHIKARI** - for his 18 years of support for the Nepalese and South Asian communities of Victoria.

**MOHSEN AFKARI** - for his work with the Iranian Cultural School and the promotion of Persian culture in Victoria.

**MANUEL G. ASUNCION** - for his support of Filipino-Australian migrant communities and wider multicultural Australia through sharing his talents in arts, drama and language.

**JOSEPHINE CESSARIO** - for her 12 years of volunteering with the Associazione Donna Calabrese Nel Mondo Inc.

**JOSEPH CHIANG** - for his 26 years of volunteering with the Prahran Chinese Elderly Citizens’ Association.

**LUBOV COWALL** - for her 10 years’ service as Head Sister at the Russian Orthodox Holy Protection of the Mother of God Cathedral and supporting the needs of the Church community.

**MARCELLO D’AMICO** - for his 33 years of volunteering with the Federazione dei Circoli Pensionati Italiani del Victoria Inc and affiliate clubs.

**PRAKASH DEVATHA** - for his role as Secretary of JET Australia Foundation, celebrating and valuing cultural diversity and promoting peace and harmony in the culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

**ROBIN DZEDINS JP** - for her role in supporting the multicultural community in the City of Casey.

**DANHONG FENG** - for her work with the Chinese Cancer Society, the Elderly Australian Chinese Homes and Victorian Elderly Chinese Welfare Association.

**FATHER IGOR FILIANOVKSY** - for his role in supporting the Russian community, and establishment of the educational centre ‘Istoki’ designed to educate those interested in Russian culture.

**JOHN HADDAD** - for his contribution to multiculturalism and improving community relations through his time with the Hume Interfaith Network and the Northern Interfaith Intercultural Network.
CHRISTOS KALAVRITINOS - for his extensive volunteer work with the multiple Greek community organisations including the Pallaconian Brotherhood of Melbourne and Victoria and the Australian Greek Welfare Association.

DEMETRE KALODIMOS - for his 50 years volunteering with the Panarcadian Association and his additional work with multiple facets of the Greek community.

VIJAYAWICKRAMA KARUNASENA - for his multifaceted contributions to the Sri Lankan community for over 20 years.

STEPAN KICHAKOV - for his contribution to the Russian Orthodox Church, including the building of the Church and community centre over 18 years.

VASILOS KOUTRAS - for his more than 30 years of volunteering with the Returned Services League Hellenic Sub Branch and for providing support to many less fortunate people within his community.

JOHN MCKINNIN - for his membership of the Filipino Australian Friendship Association of Geelong and the establishment of a bike program for refugee children in Geelong.

REVEREND DEACON GEORGE PIECH MEAT - for his role as the head of the unification committee which brought the South Sudanese community in Victoria together for the first time.

MANZOOR AHMAD MIAN - for his contribution to sharing Islamic culture with the Muslim and non-Muslim community of Hume City for the past 20 years.

GIUSEPPE MORIZZI - for his role in providing valuable assistance and support to the Italian elderly community of Victoria, particularly those who served in the Italian armed forces.

DR SRV CHARY MUDUMBI - for his work with the Telugu Association of Australia, and his assistance in faster assimilation of new migrants into established community bases.

JEANETTE MUSTAFA - for her 22 years volunteering with the Australian Albanian Women's Association.

PANDIT PATIL - for his role in supporting the Indian community to preserve their cultures and values and highlighting multicultural diversity in Victoria through events.

JADWIGA PIOTROWSKI - for her role in the Polish community, her assistance to those with low mobility or who are isolated, and her role in improving the wellbeing of migrant communities in the western region of Melbourne.

ANGELOS PORFIRIS - for his 30 years of volunteering with the Panepirotan Union of Australia and his commitment to the Greek Orthodox Community of Whittlesea.

MONICA SHARMA RAIZADA - for her work supporting victims of domestic violence from multicultural backgrounds.
CATERINA REVRENNIA - for her role as a founding member of the North East Multicultural Association and the North East Multicultural Aged Care Connections Project in the Myrtlesford region.

RITA RIPANI - for her role in sharing the Italian culture with the Ballarat community and support to new migrants in the area.

LUIS RODRIGUEZ - for his 30 years working with migrant and refugee communities in the Goulburn Valley.

RAJU SHAKYA - for his role in supporting the Nepalese community to preserve their language, cultures, and values, and highlighting multicultural diversity in Victoria through events.

SUJATHA SURENDRAN - for her contribution to the Indian dance community.

CARLA TAYLOR - for her 10 years of volunteering with the Australia Lebanon Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

DEEPAK VINAYAK JP - for his role as Founder of South Asian Community Link Group.

FARAH M. WARSAME - for his 13 years of support of the Victorian Somali and African-Australian migrant community, especially the younger generation.

ERIKA WATTS - for her role in the Interfaith Network of the City of the Greater Dandenong and her contributions to Victoria’s German community.

ORGANISATIONS:

AUSTRALIAN AFGHAN PHILANTHROPIC ASSOCIATION – for providing support to all Afghans, including assistance with social, sport and work activities. The organisation’s members responsible for these areas are volunteers who create and maintain friendly relationships with other social and political organisations.

LADIES AUXILLARY (PHILIPTOCHOS) OF THE TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD PARISH – for their role as the key volunteers for the annual multicultural festival held in January each year. This festival sees people of all cultures and faiths participate in the event. The volunteers also support the Parish’s playgroup and dance classes and have made traditional Greek costumes for the students.

MULTICULTURAL ASSOCIATION OF RUSSIAN SPEAKING WOMEN AND THEIR FAMILIES OGYONOK – for their support to Russian speaking women and their families to successfully and fully integrate into Victorian society.

SERBIAN CHORAL SOCIETY INC. - for sharing the Serbian culture with Melbourne, and their cooperation with other Serbian and ethnic choirs, artistic and folk groups including Greek, Antiochian, Russian and the Romanian Orthodox Church.
AWARD FOR SERVICE DELIVERY TO MULTICULTURAL VICTORIA

Recognising excellence in a specific service area by people or organisations who work professionally with culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse communities, actively participate in projects designed to improve services and establish good relationships.

INDIVIDUALS:

**NAIL AYKAN - COMMUNITY SERVICE**

NAIL AYKAN has been involved with the Islamic Council of Victoria (ICV) for over 10 years, and in the last five years, served as its General Manager and now Executive Director. He has played a very important role in promoting multicultural and interfaith activities on behalf of the ICV and the wider Muslim community. He has been a great advocate of multicultural activities, promoting racial harmony and developing excellent working relationship on behalf of the ICV on various fronts, including with other religions.

**JUDY BLYTON - EDUCATION**

JUDY BLYTON has been the chief librarian of the Multicultural Education Resource Centre since 1991. In later years, the collections from the Peace Education Resource Centre, the Equal Opportunities Resource Centre and Hypatia's Place were also absorbed and finally the centre became the Languages and Multicultural Education Resource Centre (LMERC). For over 30 years, Judy has worked with outstanding dedication and passion to promote English as an additional language (EAL) and languages education by providing advice and resources to Victorian teachers in schools and community settings. Through LMERC, Judy has promoted the importance of supporting the first language and culture of EAL learners—thus supporting their academic achievement as well as enabling teachers and schools to validate and value the diverse cultures, faiths and languages of their school communities.

**AMELIA CRAFTER - HEALTH**

AMELIA CRAFTER is employed as the Public Relations Co-ordinator at Wimmera Health Care Group. In almost four years of service, she has reached out to the local migrant community to improve their understanding of the health care group and services available, and to increase overall health literacy. Amelia established a ‘Migrant Maternity Program’ in 2012, aimed at reducing anxiety and fear over childbirth for expectant migrant families. Amelia commenced
one on one family tours of the local emergency department, explaining how the triage system, radiology department and ultrasounds work, often accompanied by a local mentor or translator.

Further to the maternity tours, Amelia also runs ‘Teddy Tours’ aimed at alleviating fear and anxiety associated with children’s attendance at the Emergency Department. The tour invites the children and their parents to attend the hospital with ‘Teddy’ who may have hurt himself.

She is actively involved in health promotion with the local migrant community and is also working to improve the way the organisation communicates with the local Aboriginal community.

**DANIELLE HARTRIDGE - EDUCATION**

**DANIELLE HARTRIDGE** is the Associate Director of International Education at Victoria University. She has contributed significantly to the development and improvement of international education, taken on leadership roles with the International Student Advisers’ Network of Australia, chaired countless committees, forums and networks, supported new initiatives, championed new ideas and had great success in developing remarkable student leaders. Her passion and drive is to ensure the welfare of international students is maximised and those who support international students are also recognised. She has played an integral role in the identification of the critical needs of an increasingly diverse international student population and her vision and expertise has led to the development of a wide range of highly successful programs, resources and services for international students. She is well known in the Australian international education industry for her devotion and commitment to international students. She is both a leader for her colleagues as well as a great mentor and advisor to students.

**DANNY ONG - EDUCATION**

**DANNY ONG** has contributed extensively in promoting and facilitating the employment of international students in Victoria. He is the Multicultural Employment Consultant at Monash University with the specific responsibility of improving the employability of international students and protecting their work rights. He is a passionate advocate who seeks to establish mutually beneficial relationships with various stakeholders as a means of creating more relevant employment opportunities for international students, while addressing the issue of work exploitation. He is proactively addressing issues faced by international students, and shares this information with colleagues at other universities. In June 2013, Danny was able to gather 12 local councils to participate in a roundtable discussion on issues pertaining to international student employment in Victoria. He convinced them to undertake more collaborative projects among councils in partnership with their local education institutions to address the employment challenges encountered by international students.
CON PAGONIS - GOVERNMENT

CON PAGONIS has been professionally involved with culturally and linguistically diverse communities since 1977, when he began his career with the Australian government, until he retired from local government in 2015. The focus of Con’s career has been cultural diversity public policy and program development, including migrant and refugee settlement planning, access and equity, human rights, and social cohesion. Con has established and delivered excellent service relationships in these areas, and across all levels of government. Con is best known for his extensive and comprehensive knowledge of the multicultural and government sector. He is also known for using his diverse networks to deliver excellent service relationships, build relationships with the best placed people and facilitate connections well beyond his formal roles.

LYDIA KYUNGJA PARK - EDUCATION

LYDIA KYUNGJA PARK has been a teacher at the Korean Language School of Melbourne (KLSM) for the last 13 years. KLSM is a community language school providing Korean language teaching and cultural experiences for more than thirty years to all Victorians who are interested. Lydia is dedicated to her students and her class is always full of enthusiasm to learn Korean at high standards. One clear result of Lydia’s gifted teaching is her student, Ms Yejin Song, who won the Premier’s Victorian Certificate of Education Award in 2015 for the Korean as Second Language.

For the last 16 years, Lydia has also been involved in “The Mission to Seafarers” organisation located in Geelong. Her empathy and compassion towards different human beings with different religions and roots are embedded in her teaching and community work and have resulted in her students becoming more understanding and more harmonising citizens of Victoria.

DR YALI SHAO - EDUCATION

YALI SHAO has been a teacher of Chinese language for over 21 years. She has taught the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) class at the Chinese Fellowship Chinese School since 1995, and has been the principal since 2004. Her students have benefited not only from her academic tertiary qualifications, but also for her experience in teaching VCE classes in the state education system. Yali makes a difference in the lives of her students and goes above and beyond to ensure they are supported in their studies. She contributes immensely to the school by developing and implementing the VCE Chinese study curriculum and ensuring all her VCE students achieve to the best of their own learning capabilities. She brings a unique combination of her invaluable skills and experience in quality Chinese language teaching. Her interaction with students of various backgrounds and cultures at different levels truly makes her a respected teacher.
JOHN TATOLIS - ARTS

As the CEO of Australia’s Hellenic Museum, JOHN TATOLIS’ mandate has been to promote the recognition, understanding and preservation of the artistic and cultural heritage of ancient and modern Greece. His aim is to do so in a way that engages and incorporates both the Greek and the wider community. As well as the Hellenic Museum, John curates the annual Summer Cinema Festival showcasing Greek classic films. He also worked closely with all ethnic museums to develop the Multicultural Museums of Melbourne Association, which celebrates culturally and linguistically diverse communities, and has created a unified cultural sector in Victoria by bringing together disparate cultural institutions.

RAMALINGAM WICKIRAMASINGHAM - COMMUNITY SERVICE

RAMALINGAM WICKIRAMASINGHAM is an active citizen participating in numerous projects designed to improve relationships with culturally and linguistically diverse communities. In 1993, he established both the Victorian Tamil Cultural Association and the Victorian Tamil Cultural School to share information about the Tamil language and culture.

He has also been a Board member of the Southern Migrant Resource Centre, and the Vice President of the Australian Tamil Refugee Council, resolving issues such as the education and resettlement of migrants. To support this work, he has recently published a booklet highlighting facilities for the settlement of refugees and humanitarian migrants in south east Victoria, written in both English and Tamil.

ORGANISATION:

CONNECTIONS UNITING CARE - COMMUNITY SERVICE

THE CONNECTIONS UNITING CARE CHINESE FAMILY SERVICES PROGRAM is a long established, jointly funded initiative of Connections, the City of Monash, and the Knox City Council in providing support to vulnerable and isolated Chinese speaking communities of all age groups. This program is specifically designed to support Chinese men in the challenges they face after arrival in Australia in order to improve their overall family life. Their focus is on educating Chinese parents about appropriate parenting techniques and maintaining links to traditional Chinese language and culture. They also support Chinese speaking families by increasing their knowledge and understanding of mainstream services.
Recognising officers with a sustained and outstanding record in policing in a multicultural community, and who positively contribute to enhancing understanding and trust between police and multicultural communities.

**2015 POLICE ANNUAL MULTICULTURAL AWARD**

**SERGEANT ALI GURDAG, EAST MELBOURNE POLICE** - for exemplary service to the Victorian Police, particularly through cross cultural training.

**2015 POLICE MULTICULTURAL MEDIA AWARD**

**SEN CONSTABLE MATT WALKER, SHEPPARTON POLICE** - for excellence in promoting positive policing messages via local media.

**2015 PROTECTIVE SERVICE OFFICER MULTICULTURAL AWARD**

**SEN PSO MOHAMMED ALAM** - for exemplary service to multiculturalism particularly through the development of community engagement opportunities for Police and PSO's with their local Islamic communities.

**2015 POLICE COMMUNITY EXEMPLARY AWARD**

**THE VICTORIA POLICE MUSLIM ASSOCIATION** - for excellence in providing meaningful dialogue between Victoria Police’s Islamic employees, the Victoria Police and the wider Islamic community.
Recognising outstanding practices in education and early childhood services that raise awareness and support the implementation of civics, citizenship and multicultural education.

JEWISH HOLOCAUST CENTRE

The JEWISH HOLOCAUST CENTRE’s ‘Hide and Seek: Stories of Survival’ education program provides students in Years 5 – 8 with the opportunity to explore the Holocaust through experiential learning activities. The program, which is linked to the Civics and Citizenship, English and History learning areas of the Victorian curriculum, provides students with the opportunity to explore the concepts of discrimination, race and identity, examine historical artefacts and images from the Holocaust and listen to personal stories of survival. The inspirational stories from survivors demonstrate how many people have rebuilt their lives in Australia in the face of adversity. The ‘Hide and Seek’ program allows students to learn about the migrant and refugee experience and develop an understanding of the dangers of prejudice, intolerance and racism. Students reflect on the importance of social and personal responsibility, harmony and peace as the cornerstone values of a democratic and multicultural society.

PEMBROKE PRIMARY SCHOOL

PEMBROKE PRIMARY SCHOOL in Mooroolbark is a multicultural school with more than half of students from a migrant or refugee background. Five years ago, only 0.04% of the student population was born overseas. Now a large number of Pembroke students originate from the Chin State in Burma, Indonesia, South Africa, the Philippines, Sudan and India. The school has responded to its growing diversity by implementing a number of initiatives that embrace diversity, in and outside of the classroom. This includes incorporating intercultural understanding into teaching and learning, Cultural Diversity Week and Harmony Day celebrations, international lunches, a multicultural playgroup, a pre-prep literacy program for newly arrived students, a homework club and the provision of a specialised English as an additional language program. To support these programs the school has developed partnerships with organisations including the local council, the Migrant Information Centre, Foundation House and the Centre for Multicultural Youth. As participants in the Refugee Education Support Program, the school has implemented a number of strategies to actively support engagement with families such as the recent establishment of a community garden that will be used to offer a Certificate II in Horticulture for Pembroke parents who were once farmers in their home country.
Recognising excellence in the reporting of multicultural affairs and acknowledging the outstanding efforts of a person or organisation that highlighted issues of social importance and contributed to community awareness.

INDIVIDUALS:

WALTER ADAMSON

WALTER ADAMSON has been a formidable force, holding the Russian program on 3ZZZ radio together since the station started broadcasting in June 1989. If not for his efforts, the Russian program on the largest independent ethnic radio station would have ceased to exist. The listeners, especially the elderly, are able to enjoy their own culture and language thanks to Walter and the Russian team at 3ZZZ radio station. Walter was also the founder of Russian TV on Ch 31, and purchased a video camera for the program’s use.

Walter keeps the Russian culture and language going through this volunteer work. His ability to bring the Russian media community together has been a strength, with numerous people being welcomed into the group, and encouraged to achieve their goals both within the Russian community and in wider Victorian society. His fundraising efforts, which coincided with the 15th anniversary of the radio station, and his commitment to future Russian media events, show his dedication to the industry. Walter continues to work tirelessly to maintain and improve the Russian presence in community media in Victoria.

ISMAIL KAYHAN

ISMAIL KAYHAN joined SBS Turkish Radio Melbourne in 2002 and has since been promoting multiculturalism through numerous stories. In April 2015, he produced both a radio and online feature on the 100 years of Gallipoli from a multicultural perspective. Ismail traced the families of the two men who fought so fiercely against each other on that first Anzac Day and spoke with their descendants in Turkey and Australia.

The radio feature was broadcast in more than 20 languages by SBS radio, reaching a broad multicultural audience across Australia. It helped to raise awareness of the strong relationships between the soldiers of both sides on the conflict who did not want to fight against each other, but had no choice. The feature was also picked up by TRT National Turkish radio and broadcast in a longer format of 27 minutes, with significant feedback from the audience.
KAREN POH

KAREN POH established Meld Magazine in 2008, a not-for-profit, independent, original and professional online news source for international students. Meld Magazine is designed to reach out to international students in Melbourne and provide them with the opportunity to gain real work experience. Meld Magazine is a new initiative in the education industry and has gone from strength to strength in providing international students with a voice. With no paid staff, they rely solely on volunteers. The founders of this magazine include present and former international students from various industries, including media and marketing, business, law and international student services.

Meld Magazine began as a small organisation, but has grown to include 50-60 volunteers that work across a number of functional areas of media, including editorial, social media, community engagement, events, communications, advocacy, training, advertising, business development and support services functions. Meld Magazine also works in partnership with many student organisations across the international education sector to facilitate collaboration, share resources and increase efficiency to achieve better outcomes for the international student experience.

WILFRED SIRIWARDHANA

WILFRED SIRIWARDHANA has worked continuously in the 3ZZZ Sinhala language program since 2003, initially as a broadcaster and then as a committee member of the group from 2006. The program, which goes to air three times per week, is highly regarded in the Victorian Sri Lankan community. At the annual Radiothon fundraising event, the Sinhala group has raised over $10,000 per year for the past eight years, the highest amount out of 63 community groups. Wilfrid also started the ‘Sihanadha’ community newspaper in April 2011, and works as its editor. It is distributed free of charge in several states and provides valuable information to the community.

In both broadcast and print media, Wilfrid has shown diverse talents as a producer, reporter, interviewer, writer and editor. His programs and articles are sensitive, well balanced and informative. His coverage is always consistent, includes diverse views and caters to all age groups. In preparing stories for the radio and newspaper, he is concerned with sensitivity, accuracy, balance and fairness to all those involved.
KAREN WANG

KAREN WANG has been the Chief Editor and one of board directors of The Pacific Times since 2002, and in 2012 she became the Managing Director and the Chief Editor of BQ Australia Chinese Weekly (also known as BQ Weekly) and Asian Voice Weekly. Both BQ Weekly and the Pacific Times are leading Chinese publications distributed nationally in Australia. They are platforms particularly for new migrants with Chinese as native language to connect with the culture, politics and business of Australia. Under Karen’s excellent management, both publications have grown and have developed a close relationship with the Chinese community. Karen’s commitment to multiculturalism in Australia is shown through her work in media, and her participation in community events. She devotes her time to bridging the gap between the Chinese community and Australia’s mainstream society with the goal to promote the vivid multiculturalism of Australia.

ORGANISATIONS:

CHANNEL 31 MELBOURNE AND GEELONG

C31 MELBOURNE AND GEELONG is Victoria’s not-for-profit community television service providing locally-based entertainment, education and information. Transmitted from Mount Dandenong, C31 provides access and representation to the many diverse communities within Victoria, broadcasting over 90 new locally-made programs every week. Channel 31 has a strong multicultural presence with approximately 50 programs produced by community television volunteers and independent television makers, most which are from multicultural communities across the state. C31 Melbourne provides an open access platform to broadcast and is constantly working towards ensuring it best represents Melbourne’s diverse communities.

INDIAN LINK MEDIA GROUP

INDIAN LINK MELBOURNE has been serving Victoria’s Indian community, and others interested in India, since 2001. As migrants in this country, they are passionate about successful integration. They seek out stories that depict community members contributing significantly to their adopted country. As proud Australians, they take great pride in highlighting the efforts by mainstream Australians who are ‘Indophiles’ or who have worked closely with India in one way or another. This year, Indian Link featured stories showing the community contributing to the wider society. Calendar Indian events such as Holi, Diwali and Independence Day were all celebrated with much fanfare, with the wider Australian society joining in. The work done at Indian Link has served to help audiences connect the Indian and the Australian experience, thus promoting awareness about Victoria’s diversity.
**LATROBE VALLEY EXPRESS**

*LATROBE VALLEY EXPRESS* has a newly created “Multicultural Portfolio” to show the constructive impact that the multicultural community has in Latrobe Valley and more broadly. Articles have featured: ageing migrants’ contribution to the region; skilled migrants and their role in the community; the barriers and obstacles they face; and many others showcasing the benefits of the diverse community. In February of this year, they dealt with a potentially difficult situation in a balanced and sensitive manner. After Islamophobic remarks were made by an elected councillor of Latrobe City Council, Latrobe Valley Express were concerned that giving too much prominence to the opinions of this councillor and of this debate could potentially further inflame the situation.

However, they acknowledged the public’s right to know about the issue and to hold people in positions of authority to account. By including an editorial explaining the reasons behind the choice and length of the coverage they were able to justify their reporting style, while building social cohesion and understanding in their community.

**PBS 106.7FM**

From January 27 to May 4 2015, *PBS 106.7FM* worked in partnership with Multicultural Arts Victoria (MAV) to present the Collaborative Radio Project. The project, facilitated by PBS presenters Maddy MacFarlane and Jess Fairfax and a MAV project officer, provided skills development workshops and one on one mentoring to 12 budding radio makers from emerging, refugee and asylum-seeker communities. The project aimed to provide the skills and networks necessary for participants to be empowered to tell their own stories through radio and sound and to encourage engagement with community radio.

The program incorporated training in radio techniques and collaborative radio making, as the 12 participants from Ethiopia, Afghanistan, Iran and Vietnam were partnered with experienced producers from PBS, SYN and ABC Radio National. In total, 10 stories were made, including one husband and wife team covering a mix of documentary, personal narrative and soundscapes that spoke of the power of music, the challenges of resettlement, mental health issues in refugee communities and overcoming personal demons.
Recognising individuals who have shown exemplary leadership by implementing a vision that promotes cultural diversity and benefits the whole community, and whose contributions are outstanding, inspirational and positively influence cultural awareness in the general community.

**ABHISHEK AWASTHI**

**ABHISHEK AWASTHI** has made a significant contribution to social cohesion and harmony in multicultural Victoria, particularly Bendigo. As well as setting up numerous mentoring and tutoring programs for people from refugee backgrounds, including the Karen community and Chinese high school students, Abhishek has delivered numerous initiatives and programs to support young refugee students and humanitarian students.

Abhishek was a core part of the New and Emerging Communities Leadership Program Advisory Working Group and worked tirelessly to establish the program in Bendigo. The program was held over four months and provided participants with skills and knowledge on how to communicate with authenticity, break down cultural barriers within the community and create effective networks.

As an advocate for improving leadership skills, Abhishek also shared his insights and leadership experiences with a Cross-Cultural Leadership workshop. It was the first time any such program was offered in regional Victoria to develop the leadership skills and capacity of leaders from new and emerging communities.

**KHURRAM JAHANGIR KHAN**

**KHURRAM KHAN** is the coordinator of the Sudanese Australian Integrated Learning (SAIL) program at Wyndham Campus, a homework school for Sudanese and wider African community refugees and migrant students in primary and secondary schools. As part of this program he mentors the tutors and coaches young people who wish to volunteer with people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds. He also mentors students from non-English speaking backgrounds, especially of African and Pakistani ethnicity. He motivates them to serve the community and guides them towards tertiary studies.

As an active member of the Rotary Club of Hoppers Crossing, Khurrum has founded the ‘Rotary Youth Leadership and Philanthropy Award’, where the club recognises young people from various backgrounds residing in Wyndham. He gives a huge portion of his free time towards the community. As well as supporting the youth of the community, he is active in bridging the gap between senior citizens and youth by mentoring older community members.
HANISHA SHARMA-LUITAL – YOUNG PERSON

HANISHA SHARMA-LUITAL has committed her time to numerous multicultural projects since arriving in Australia in 2003 from Bhutan, including serving as a member of the Multifaith Multicultural Youth Network (MMYN), run by the Office of Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship. As well as this, she was youngest and first Bhutanese refugee lifeguard and the youngest representative to the Youth Parliament in Victoria in 2012.

In 2015 Hanisha was appointed as the first female AFL Multicultural Community Ambassador from the Bhutanese Community. She now heads the Help-Himalayan Youth Foundation Inc., which is a not-for-profit community organisation run by youth from Bhutanese and Karen refugee backgrounds, and the Nepalese community.

CELIA TRAN – YOUNG PERSON

CELIA TRAN has been a dedicated, integral contributor to the Youth Advisory Group for the Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network Australia, auspiced by the Centre for Multicultural Youth. As the sole representative for Victoria, Celia has helped establish a clear purpose and terms for young people’s participation in the group, to ensure the group is able to address the issues faced by young people from Victoria.

In addition to her representation of Victoria on national platforms, Celia remains a valuable contributor to her local community. She currently volunteers at the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre where she works alongside young asylum seekers to empower people through capacity building and finding sustainable education, employment or volunteering pathways. On top of this, Celia has been a committed member of the MMYN for the past two years.
BESTWAY SUPERMARKET was formed in 2013 by Mohammad Ali Safar Mohammad, Mohammad Reza Khademi and Ahmad Ali Hussainzada as the biggest multicultural supermarket in Greater Dandenong and Casey. Bestway Supermarket started with a group of 10 employees aiming to welcome and include people of all cultures and languages. They actively promote cultural diversity in their workforce by developing a program to employ people of different backgrounds.

Since 2013, their workforce has increased 100% and includes employees of Albanian, Pakistani, Iranian and Macedonian and Bosnian origins. By employing multilingual employees Bestway Supermarket is able to cater to a wide range of communities and helps newly arriving migrants settle faster and easier.

Bestway has dedicated aisles of products to meet the needs of different cultures. For example, there are aisles dedicated to products imported from particular countries, with labels written in the relevant languages. These aisles cater to customers with European, Asian, Middle East and African backgrounds. The aim of the program was to promote cultural diversity by building a bridge between cultures and communities.
VICTORIAN MULTICULTURAL MARKETING AWARD

Recognising a business that uses a multilingual workforce and innovative marketing and communication strategies to engage multicultural audiences and who use their brand or reputation to promote the benefits of cultural diversity.

EBOOK DYNASTY

Established in June 2012, EBOOK DYNASTY is the only publisher of Chinese books and ebooks outside of China. Based in Melbourne, the business helps all English language authors, agents and publishers to translate, publish and promote their titles in Chinese in multiple digital formats and in print. To cater for authors and readers worldwide, their website features three portals in traditional Chinese, simplified Chinese and English. They also promote services and products in these three languages. eBook Dynasty has a team of professional translators providing faithful, fluent and graceful translation between English and Chinese and they have promoted many Australian and international authors. eBook Dynasty continues to promote publishing and reading in multiple formats, for authors and readers of diverse linguistic, ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds, in digital and print formats.
Recognising a municipal council who made major improvements or developed initiatives that provide enhanced and culturally relevant services to culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse communities, promote inclusive participation and engagement of those communities in civic life and enable greater access and communication between community and council.

**WYNDHAM CITY COUNCIL**

The whole-of-council commitment to engaging with Wyndham’s culturally diverse communities has led to enhanced and appropriate services, and a stronger engagement with these communities in order to make relevant policies. This includes the 2014 Multicultural Policy and Action Plan which engaged more than 400 community members over the course of a month.

Programs include the Wyndham Exchange Community Dinners where 300 community leaders are given an opportunity to meet Councillors and senior Council staff in order to build bridges between these new communities and Council. There are also Neighbourhood Bus Tours to welcome members of new and emerging communities to the City of Wyndham, and to increase their awareness of what the Council does. A targeted component of the community leadership development program has been implemented for women from new and emerging communities to build the leadership capacity of people not traditionally recognised as leaders.
Recognising the outstanding achievements of a person or organisation who has developed programs, strategies or activities which furthered cross-cultural and cross-religious harmony in Victoria, and has initiated activities involving different cultural or religious groups working together on a project that demonstrates or promotes harmony and increases mutual understanding.

CARMEL GUERRA

CARMEL GUERRA is the founder of the Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY) which focuses on building community understanding and tolerance rather than simply delivering programs that support disadvantaged refugee and migrant young people. Over the past decade Carmel has led programs across Victoria that build a sense of connection, create youth participation and promote tolerance. Over the past five years, more than 5,000 young people have participated in the program.

One of the initiatives Carmel established was the Mary Danckert Youth Internship. Carmel acts as a mentor to many young community leaders, assisting them to create their own organisations. One of these is Sudanese Australian Youth Action Group, a group of hopeful and passionate young Sudanese Australians who are committed to creating and leading community change for African young people. Their mission is to support, empower and promote young African Australians.
Recognising a newly arrived migrant or refugee who plays an outstanding leadership and volunteering role, demonstrates cultural diversity values and contribute towards making Victoria a harmonious multicultural community.

ROSHAN BHANDARY

ROSHAN BHANDARY’S career in the fields of community development, gender development and social justice spans 15 years, with her working almost exclusively with culturally and linguistically diverse communities. Since arriving in Australia from Nepal in 2008, she has worked at inTouch Multicultural Centre against Family Violence as a Program Manager, where she has shaped the development and delivery of significant and unique community engagement programs with a focus on primary and early intervention. Roshan has also been instrumental in the establishment of language specific men’s behaviour change programs for two cultural communities.
The Victorian Government and the Victorian Multicultural Commission would like to thank everyone who participated in Victoria’s 2015 Multicultural Awards for Excellence.