



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
VICTORIA

## VICTORIAN MULTICULTURAL AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE 2018

**Wednesday 12 September, 2018**

**The Honourable Robin Scott MP**, Minister for Multicultural Affairs and Minister for Finance, representing the Premier, and **Ms Shaojie Wu**

**Ms Judith Graley MP**, Parliamentary Secretary for Education, representing the Minister for Education, and **Dr Stephen Graley**

**The Hon Bruce Atkinson MLC**, President of the Legislative Council

**Mrs Inga Peulich MP**, Shadow Minister for Multicultural Affairs, representing the Leader of the Opposition

**Ms Helen Kapalos**, Chairperson, Victorian Multicultural Commission and other Victorian Commissioners

**Distinguished guests**

**Ladies and gentlemen**

First, I acknowledge the Traditional owners of the land upon which we are gathering and pay my respects to their Elders past and present and to any Elders here with us this evening.

Tony and I are delighted to welcome you all to the 2018 Victorian Multicultural Awards for Excellence.

We talk of multicultural Victoria with pride. We love noting that we are comprised of people from 200 cultural backgrounds and 130 different faiths, and that almost half of us were either born overseas or had one parent born overseas.

We love talking about it because it is truly a strength of our community. We value inclusion and harmony. We know we are enriched by our diversity.

But these awards make me reflect on two things.

The first is that so much of which we are proud, when it comes to Victoria's multicultural cities and regions, simply would not – could not – exist, if it weren't for the contributions of so many of the people in this room. You give your ideas, your expertise and your generous care to ensure that people feel welcome, safe and able to share in Victoria's peace and prosperity.

The second thing I reflect on is that, no matter how proud we feel, we must never rest on our laurels. We must remain vigilant and driven, to ensure that successful multiculturalism is never undermined or diminished.

You are here this evening because you have contributed to your community in these important ways. And you have contributed with excellence.

Your contributions are reflected across different categories – from youth to media, and from police to business, for example.

You come from different parts of our State.

And you are no doubt motivated by different experiences.

For some, it might be because you made the long journey to Australia yourself, and have experienced first-hand the rigours of settling in a foreign land.

For some others, aware of the kindness afforded to you or your family members, you want to pay it forward to those who have arrived subsequently.

For others again, you just have the capacity to empathise, and the goodness to help, even without a close experience of your own.

But as every area of civic and community life in Victoria is touched by some element of multiculturalism, every Victorian is touched by your generosity.

Whatever you do to welcome a newcomer, to support a group to settle into the community, or to ensure that someone is spared a crippling sense of isolation, you do for all of us. You make Victoria better, safer, happier and stronger.

Congratulations to each of you who will receive an award this evening. This event is about you. So please enjoy the hospitality and the accolades from those around you.

Thank you to your families, colleagues and friends, who help and support your work.

Thank you, as well, to those who have nominated someone for an award. You are the communities 'eyes and ears' on the ground, witnessing the special contributions of the award recipients.

And, finally, thank you to those with the difficult task of judging the awards: having to choose excellence from amongst excellence!

We look forward to meeting as many of you as possible shortly. But for now, it is my pleasure to invite the Honourable Robin Scott MP Minister for Multicultural Affairs, representing the Premier, to address you.