



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
VICTORIA

# **2024 VICTORIAN SENIOR OF THE YEAR AWARDS**

## **Thursday 24 October 2024**

### **Acknowledgments**

**The Honourable Jacinta Allan**, Premier of Victoria

**The Honourable Ingrid Stitt**, Minister for Ageing

**The Honourable Julian Hill**, Federal Assistant Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs

**Commodore Greg Yorke**, Senior Naval Officer Victoria and Chair, Victorian Veterans Council

**Robert Caulfield**, President, Council on the Ageing Victoria

### **Award recipients**

### **Distinguished guests**

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

It's a pleasure to welcome you all to Government House this morning for the Victorian Senior of the Year Awards.

As the Governor is currently occupied on an Official Visit overseas, I have the great privilege to be involved in today's ceremony.

There is a well-known saying that embodies these awards.

It tells us:

*'The best time to plant a tree was three decades prior, and the second-best time to plant a tree is in the present moment.'*

While there is much debate about who is responsible for that quote – its sentiment reflects the theme for this year's Awards: 'Explore, Engage, Evolve.'

It's crucial to view ageing through this lens, as it's never too late to pursue your passions and find fulfillment.

And it's in this pursuit that a sense of community and shared purpose arises.

Whether it's donating your time, supporting others or even picking up a new skill or hobby – your contribution has impacted countless Victorians.

For some parts of Victoria, particularly regional Victoria, creating and maintaining community is a difficult task.

But it's in this challenge that we see the true spirit of community shining through.

No matter the obstacles, Victorian seniors have found a way to support one another.

From organising community-wide events, to simply making an effort to check in on your neighbours – these actions go to the heart of why you and your families are being recognised today.

These acts – grand or simple – embody the spirit of 'Explore, Engage, Evolve'.

Importantly, not only do these efforts evolve your own ability to pursue your passions – they also evolve the conversation around ageing.

Getting older is not a decline, it's a part of the ongoing process of growth, contribution and connection.

Each and every day, your actions are helping redefine what ageing means in our society.

And by embracing the 'Explore, Engage, Evolve' ethos, you are not just living to the fullest, but inspiring others to do the same.

Loneliness and social isolation are tragic challenges that seniors can face.

Often, it's seniors themselves that are leading the charge to creating the solutions to this issue.

This speaks volumes about your resilience, your compassion, and your unwavering commitment to one another.

Through your work, you are actively shaping a better future for yourselves and generations to come.

And in doing so, planting a tree for your community, and the ones to come.

I want to thank all nominees for the contributions you make to our State.

Not only have you embraced new opportunities and created connections – you have also become agents of change, challenging perceptions across Victoria.

You are living proof that ageing is not defined by limitations, but by opportunity and potential.

Congratulations, and thank you for making Victoria a better place for everyone.

I now invite the Premier to address us.