

Media Release

The Hon Ros Spence MP
Minister for Multicultural Affairs
Minister for Community Sport
Minister for Youth



Thursday, 17 December 2020

DIVERSITY HEROES HONOURED AT MULTICULTURAL AWARDS

The Andrews Labor Government has paid tribute to the many Victorians who helped strengthen the state's multiculturalism and brought communities together in a year like no other.

In keeping with public health advice, the 19th annual Victorian Multicultural Awards for Excellence – which traditionally draws hundreds of people – was held virtually and broadcast on Channel 31 on Wednesday night.

This year, 71 Victorians were acknowledged for their outstanding achievements in strengthening multiculturalism through either professional or volunteer service to the community, including winner of the Premier's Award for Community Harmony Sheikh Alaa Elzokm.

Sheikh Elzokom is the Imam of the Heidelberg Mosque and was recognised for his work building connections between people of different faiths.

The Awards recognise people and organisations who foster cross-cultural understanding, build social cohesion and support people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, with 15 award categories in total including justice, sport, arts, business and community innovation.

The Multicultural Award for Excellence in Community Response and Recovery was awarded jointly to Sukhvinder Duggal, Vincenzo De Paolis, Gracie Lolicato and Katrina Lolicato, the Islamic Council of Victoria, the residents of the North Melbourne and Flemington public housing high rises and Carlton Community Network.

These extraordinary Victorians were at the front line during the bushfires and coronavirus pandemic supporting families and communities with food relief, emergency aid and information in community languages, as well as providing critical support to Victorian Government emergency responders and public health teams.

A record 450 nominations were received this year, reflecting the extraordinary year that was and the enormous sacrifices and contributions made by so many.

To see the full list of award winners, visit multiculturalcommission.vic.gov.au/2020-multicultural-awards-excellence-recipients.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Multicultural Affairs Ros Spence

"I am inspired by the many Victorians out there working and volunteering tirelessly to make our state more welcoming and inclusive for all people."

"On behalf of the Andrews Labor Government, I extend my sincere congratulations to all the recipients for their commitment to our multicultural state and I look forward to celebrating their future achievements."

Quotes attributable to Victorian Multicultural Commission Chairperson Vivienne Nguyen

"This year has been incredibly challenging, so it's more important than ever to celebrate the achievements of our multicultural communities."

"The Multicultural Awards celebrate our diversity heroes who make such a difference to the lives of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds."

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