Media Release

The Hon Luke Donnellan MP
Minister for Child Protection
Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers

Wednesday, 29 September 2021

DISABILITY AWARDS CELEBRATE EXCELLENCE

The incredible achievements of Victorians with disability and those creating and advocating for a fairer, more inclusive community have been recognised at the 2021 Victorian Disability Awards.

Now in their tenth year, the awards highlight the great work of individuals, teams and organisations that increase the rights and participation of people with disability, including those who strived for inclusion and fairness during the pandemic.

Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers Luke Donnellan congratulated the winners, who were announced yesterday at an online ceremony hosted by Paralympic swimmer Sam Bramham OAM.

The winner of the Minister's Award for Outstanding Leadership is Rocca Salcedo, who in 2019 established Victoria's first para-dance club run by people with disabilities, Dance & Roll. Ms Salcedo has built the club into a thriving community of more than 20 paid members attending online and in-person dance sessions.

The winners and inductees, chosen from eight categories, also include:

- Emerging leader award – Llewellyn Prain, WaterAble
- Excellence in promoting health, housing and wellbeing – Narelle Fairweather, Nextt
- Excellence in employment outcomes – Rise Program, Department of Health
- Excellence in creating inclusive communities – Zoos Victoria, Zoos Victoria
- Excellence in promoting rights, fairness and safety – NDIS Access Team, Villamanta Disability Rights Legal Service Inc.
- Volunteer award – Thi Duong, Vietnamese Families with Special Needs
- Lifetime achievement honour roll – Maurice Gleeson OAM, Blind Sports and Recreation Victoria
- Lifetime achievement honour roll – Noel Bates, Colanda Parents and Friends Association
- Lifetime achievement honour roll – Margherita Coppolino, National Ethnic Disability Alliance

For the list of winners and more information about the awards, visit dhhs.vic.gov.au/disabilityawards.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers Luke Donnellan

"Victorians with disability, community members and organisations have made incredible contributions as they strive to build a more inclusive society that is fair and equal – I thank and congratulate every one of them."

"These awards are particularly poignant this year amid the challenges of the pandemic, providing the opportunity to shine a light on Victorians who went above and beyond to help others in the community."

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