

Media Release

Mr Tim Pallas MP

Treasurer

Minister for Industrial Relations

Minister for Economic Development

Minister for Trade



Friday, 7 October 2022

CELEBRATING VICTORIA'S INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION EXCELLENCE

A student nurse who triaged COVID patients for testing at hospitals during the pandemic and Geelong's innovative Gordon Institute of TAFE have been honoured at the Victorian International Education Awards.

Minister for Trade Tim Pallas congratulated the finalists and winners who have excelled and made significant contributions to the Victorian community.

This year's awards featured student finalists from 11 countries, highlighting the diversity of the sector and how international students enhance our state's cultural knowledge.

Student awards were presented across seven categories, including higher education, vocational education and training, English language, research and regional Victoria, with winners receiving a \$6,000 scholarship and the International Student of the Year winner receiving an additional \$10,000 scholarship.

The winner of the Premier's Award for International Student of the Year was Divyangana Sharma, a Bachelor of Nursing student at Holmesglen Institute. To support Victoria's pandemic response and her local community, Ms Sharma joined the frontline health workforce while maintaining her academic achievements.

Working in triage at hospitals and COVID testing sites, Ms Sharma is now employed in the emergency department at the Epworth Richmond as she continues her studies.

Regional international student of the year was Minh Duc Nguyen, a doctorate student at Deakin University who is researching how Barwon Water can best reuse waste products from water treatment plants and has established a social and support group for Vietnamese students in Geelong.

Victoria's top international education providers were also recognised, with the Geelong-based Gordon Institute of TAFE taking out the prestigious Premier's Award for *Victorian International Education Provider of the Year*.

The Gordon Institute of TAFE supported its international students throughout the pandemic with a personalised approach that ensured safety and connection to the community, while providing valuable work experience through local employers. To see all award winners, visit studymelbourne.vic.gov.au.

International education contributes significantly to Victoria's economy and communities as the state's largest services export. In 2021 it generated \$6.9 billion in export revenue, with more than 182,000 students enrolled from around 160 countries.

The Andrews Labor Government recently launched the *Victorian International Education Recovery Plan 2025* outlining the vision for the sector, including initiatives to consolidate Victoria as a leader in education excellence and student experience backed by almost \$53 million in funding.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Trade Tim Pallas

"Congratulations to all of this year's winners and finalists for their tremendous achievements and their contribution to the community beyond their own study and research efforts."

"The dedication of our international students and education providers supports Victoria's reputation as the Education State and one of the world's best places to study and forge a global career."

Media contact: Shaun Phillips 0407 553 763 | shaun.phillips@minstaff.vic.gov.au