

Media Release

The Hon Colin Brooks MP
Minister for Housing
Minister for Multicultural Affairs



Sunday, 23 April 2023

SOCIAL HOUSING GARDENERS CELEBRATED IN FULL BLOOM

Social housing renters have been honoured for their gardening skills at the annual Victoria in Bloom competition.

Minister for Housing Colin Brooks on Friday congratulated the entrants and winners of the competition that recognises and rewards the efforts of gardening enthusiasts living in social housing.

The program celebrates community participation and social inclusion as vital to the health of local communities. It first kicked off in 2004 and continues to grow in strength, with more than 100 entries received this year.

The Victoria in Bloom Gardener of the Year award was presented to Dekoda Bell, a passionate teen gardener from Montrose, who discovered gardening just three years ago.

Dekoda has incorporated hard rubbish items into his garden, recruits his friends to help create new patches, and credits the hobby with keeping him out of trouble.

Other winners are:

- Best Balcony or Container Garden – Neil Arnott from East Bendigo
- Best Small Enclosed Garden – Carolyn Slevin from Norlane
- Best Household Garden – Carina Gemenis & John Wilson from Ringwood East
- Best Edible Garden – Barry Sharp from Traralgon
- Best Sustainable Garden – Nola Nugent from Nunawading
- Best Community or Common Area Garden – Aye Maung Asho from Ferntree Gully
- Best First Year Entered Garden – Campbell Laycock from Hawthorn.

Entries for the 2023-24 competition will open on 28 August. For more information, visit housing.vic.gov.au/victoria-bloom-garden-competition.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Housing Colin Brooks

"Victoria in Bloom demonstrates how gardening brings people together around a common interest and enhances physical and mental wellbeing."

"We are so proud to recognise and pay tribute to the active participation of renters in their gardens and communities."

"Congratulations to all participants – your gardening efforts play such an important role in growing community connectedness and enhancing our built and natural environment."