

Media Release

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



Wednesday, 21 June 2023

WORLD REFUGEE DAY BRINGS RECOGNITION AND AWARDS

Four remarkable people who have rebuilt their lives in Victoria to serve others have been recognised at the 2023 Victorian Refugee Awards.

Now in its third year and hosted by the Victorian Multicultural Commission (VMC) as part of Refugee Week, the awards recognise the achievements of Victorians who arrived in Australia as refugees or asylum seekers.

Deputy Chairperson Bwe Thay was proud to present the awards alongside Minister for Multicultural Affairs Colin Brooks and VMC Chairperson Viv Nguyen AM.

The awards highlight people who excel through study, work, entrepreneurship or volunteering, including those who own or run businesses or organisations that support others with refugee or asylum seeker backgrounds.

Twelve people or organisations received awards including:

- The Young Leader Award went to Athraa Yousif, a refugee mental health advocate, EAL Counsellor and Peer Career Advisor, who uses her own lived experiences in Iraq's wars to inspire others and advocate for more mental health support for young refugees
- The Leadership Award went to Jacob Thang who arrived from Chin State Myanmar 11 years ago and started a small gardening business which is now a successful landscaping company employing people from the local Chin community. Jacob is also the founder of Chin Myanmar Community Care and the Vice President of the Western Chin Community
- The Achievement Award went to the Dandenong-based Afghan Women's Organisation Victoria which supports and empowers Afghan women and girls from diverse backgrounds.

The Andrews Labor Government is proud to support refugees and asylum seekers who are part of Victoria's vibrant multicultural communities.

In this year's Budget, the Labor Government invested more than \$120 million in festivals, events, infrastructure, education and support programs that benefit multicultural Victorians.

This includes \$6 million to continue programs that support refugees and asylum seekers including the delivery of culturally appropriate health care and education for newly arrived and at-risk refugees, and support for people seeking asylum who are ineligible for basic safety net supports.

The full list of winners is available at multiculturalcommission.vic.gov.au/Victorian-refugee-awards.

Quotes attributable to Victorian Minister for Multicultural Affairs Colin Brooks

"These awards are about recognising people who choose to serve their community and make Victoria a welcoming and inclusive place for people from all backgrounds."

Quotes attributable to Victorian Multicultural Commission Deputy Chairperson Bwe Thay

"It's important to elevate the voices of individuals with refugee or asylum seeker backgrounds so we can overcome the hurdles and celebrate the gift of cultural diversity."

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