

Media Release

The Hon Ros Spence MP
Minister for Roads and Road Safety
Minister for First Peoples
Minister for Community Sport



Friday, 8 May 2026

TRAILBLAZERS JOIN ABORIGINAL HONOUR ROLL

First Nations trailblazers have been recognised for their contributions at the Aboriginal Honour Roll Ceremony.

Minister Spence inducted 10 new artists, advocates and activists onto the 14th Honour Roll.

They join 158 First Nations Victorians recognised for achievements across arts, education, health, sport and community leadership.

The 2026 inductees are:

- Uncle Henry Atkinson, a retired professor, educator and author, and leader protecting First Nations culture.
- Aunty Margaret Rose Atkinson for decades of service at the Aborigines Advancement League and Victorian Aboriginal Child and Community Agency.
- Kylie Anne Belling, first Aboriginal graduate VCA graduate, founding ILBIJERRI company member and actor in *The Sapphires*, *The Flying Doctors*, *Prisoner* and *Redfern Now*.
- Dr Destiny Deacon Hon FRPS (posthumous), a globally recognised artist, activist, educator, and LGBTQIA+ trailblazer.
- Aunty Jemmes Handy PSM, for a lifetime of service across youth programs, community organisations, and justice advisory groups.
- Aunty Helen Morgan, who served for decades in Aboriginal health and community in the Bairnsdale region.
- Uncle Joel Wright, inaugural producer for ABC's *Speaking Out*, and advocate for justice, culture and language.
- Aunty Annette Xiberras, archaeologist, unionist, proud gay woman and one of Victoria's first Cultural Heritage Officers.
- Felicia Dean, CEO of Rumbalara Aboriginal Cooperative with more than 25 years' service to her community.
- Aunty Daphne Yarram, advocate for women's voices in First Nations policy, and driving force behind Yoowinna Wurnalung Healing Service.

The full list of inductees is available at firstpeoplesrelations.vic.gov.au/aboriginal-honour-roll-inductees.

Quotes attributable to Minister for First Peoples Ros Spence

"The Aboriginal Honour Roll is a list of legends who have shaped their communities and Victoria for the better."

"These trailblazers are prime examples of how First Nations excellence and advocacy make our state stronger."