



VICTORIAN
volunteering
AWARDS 2025

2025 Winners Showcase



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2025 Victorian Volunteering Awards

Message from the Premier

There's something so special about volunteering: giving up your time and energy to help others.

And every day, thousands of individuals and organisations across our state quietly dedicate themselves to making a real difference. The annual Volunteering Awards are a time to recognise them, and the enormous contribution they make.

From public health to education to disaster relief, the 2025 nominees embody the values of care and compassion. As Premier of Victoria, I want to offer my heartfelt thanks, and recognise your hard work.

Congratulations to every finalist and winner at this year's Volunteering Awards.

And thank you to every single volunteer, for all that you do.



The Hon. Jacinta Allan MP
Member for Bendigo East
Premier of Victoria

2025 Victorian Volunteering Awards

Message from the Minister

Every day, volunteers give their time and energy to support their communities.

The annual Volunteering Awards are an opportunity to recognise and celebrate the incredible impact of volunteers and volunteer-involving organisations across Victoria.

This year's awards program showcases the diverse ways volunteers are making a difference. This exceptional group reflects the diversity of Victoria's volunteers and the evolving landscape of organisations and causes where volunteers are leading change and contributing to their communities.

As Minister for Carers and Volunteers, I am incredibly proud of the work our volunteers do. Volunteering is so valuable to so many people, and it is truly one of our state's greatest assets.

Congratulations to all the award finalists and winners, and thank you for your ongoing dedication to your communities.

I look forward to working with you, and all of Victoria's volunteers, to continue building a vibrant, connected and thriving Victoria together.



The Hon. Ros Spence MP
Minister for Carers and Volunteers



2025 Victorian Volunteering Awards

Message from the CEO

It's an honour to gather again to celebrate the remarkable individuals and organisations recognised through the 2025 Victorian Volunteering Awards.

These Awards shine a light on all that is great and worth celebrating about the Victorian community at large – qualities like generosity, care and selfless giving. Through these legacies and honours, we recognise people whose example we hope to emulate and inspire future generations to follow.

At Volunteering Victoria, we passionately believe the best way to meet community needs is through active and generous volunteering. Doing what is important, not because it is paid for but because it really, truly matters, is what makes and builds community.

Plus everyone who volunteers knows the secret that what you gain from volunteering often outweighs anything you can give!

Every finalist and nominee reflects just one example of the collective strength of our volunteering community. Whether through grassroots initiatives, major organisations or informal acts of kindness, your efforts help create a more inclusive, connected and compassionate state.

We also recognise how volunteers and organisations are adapting, building more flexible, welcoming and sustainable models of engagement as we collectively respond to the way volunteering is evolving.

At Volunteering Victoria, we are proud to stand alongside members, partners and volunteers across all sectors as we navigate these changes together. The future may look different, but the spirit of volunteering remains the same: serving each other because we care.

To everyone recognised – and to the 3.3 million who volunteer across our state – thank you. Your generosity and dedication are both humbling and deeply inspiring.

Geoff Sharp
Chief Executive Officer
Volunteering Victoria



2025 Victorian Volunteering Awards

About the Awards

Showcasing excellence by individuals, teams and organisations throughout 2025, the Victorian Volunteering Awards are run by Volunteering Victoria with the support of the Victorian State Government.

The Awards combine the previously separate Premier's Volunteer Champions Awards, featuring the Dame Elisabeth Murdoch Award for Volunteer of the Year, and the annual Volunteering Victoria State Awards. This creates a single nomination process and a more significant awards ceremony celebrating volunteers and volunteerism across the State of Victoria.

Individual Awards:

- Volunteer Leadership Award
- Volunteer Impact Award
- Volunteer Commitment Award
- Young Volunteer Award

Organisation Awards:

- Inclusive Volunteering Award
- Volunteering Innovation Award
- Volunteering Partnerships Award
- Grassroots Volunteering Award

Overall Awards:

- *Premier's Volunteer of the Year*, Dame Elisabeth Murdoch Award
- *Premier's Organisation of the Year*, Volunteering Excellence Award

Judging process

A judging panel considered all eligible nominations and rated each against the description for the selected Award category. Nominations with the highest combined scores were then shortlisted as finalists. A VIP selection panel awarded the overall winners in each category.

The Premier's Volunteer of the Year, **Dame Elisabeth Murdoch Award** was selected by the Premier from the winners of the four individual categories.

The Premier's Organisation of the Year, **Volunteering Excellence Award** was selected by the Premier from the winners of the four organisation categories.



2025 Victorian Volunteering Awards

Dame Elisabeth Murdoch Award



First awarded in 2013, the prestigious Dame Elisabeth Murdoch Award recognises extraordinary volunteering service, commitment, and impact for people, a community, group, organisation or cause in Victoria.

The Premier’s Volunteer of the Year Award is proudly named in honour of Dame Elisabeth’s extraordinary legacy. This prestigious accolade celebrates her values of compassion, dedication, and leadership in volunteering, recognising individuals who – like her – make a profound difference in the lives of others.

The winner of the Dame Elisabeth Murdoch Award, Premier’s Volunteer of the Year, is also awarded a \$10,000 donation to a not-for-profit organisation of their choice.

Trophy design

“The overlapping leaves represent the interactive efforts of individuals within the community. Together, the leaves form a canopy that protects and helps others. This trophy was inspired by Dame Elisabeth Murdoch’s passion for gardening and her lifetime support for the arts and those in need.”



Dame Elisabeth Murdoch 1902 - 2012

A trailblazing philanthropist and passionate supporter of community wellbeing, Dame Elisabeth Murdoch’s life was a testament to the power of generosity and service.

As a dedicated volunteer and advocate, she devoted herself to numerous causes, particularly in health, education and the arts. Many of Melbourne and Australia's most cherished institutions, from the Royal Children's Hospital to the Australian Ballet and the Botanic Gardens, have benefited from her involvement.

Dame Elisabeth’s legacy as a champion of volunteering has left an indelible mark on communities across Victoria and beyond. Passionate about fostering cultural and social cohesion, her unwavering dedication to building strong, connected communities has inspired countless others to embrace the spirit of giving.



Premier's Volunteer of the Year (2025)

DAME ELISABETH MURDOCH AWARD

Glenys Watts

Glenys Watts is a proud Gunaikurnai Elder and respected community leader whose influence spans more than 30 years of dedicated volunteer service.

A tireless advocate for cultural preservation, truth-telling, and community wellbeing, Glenys has strengthened countless organisations and initiatives across Victoria. Her leadership has been pivotal in advancing Indigenous health, family violence prevention, and culturally safe services through roles such as Chairperson of the Traditional Owner Land Management Board and key contributor to the Dhelk Dja – Safe Our Way strategy.

She played a central role in negotiating the Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation Settlement Agreement, established Willum Warrain Gathering Place, and supported rehabilitation programs through Ngwala Willumbong.

Glenys's dedication includes decades of service on boards and committees, creative projects preserving Aboriginal history, and mentoring future generations. Her selfless commitment has shaped resilient communities and left an enduring legacy of respect, culture, and hope.



"I don't do volunteering for recognition. I actually do it out of passion to drive and create change." – **Glenys Watts**



Premier's Organisation of the Year (2025)

VOLUNTEERING EXCELLENCE AWARD

Gig Workers' Hub

The Gig Workers' Hub (GWH) is Australia's first dedicated space for food delivery riders, a workforce often overlooked despite being essential to city life.

Established in 2022, the Hub offers a safe, welcoming environment where riders – many international students or recent migrants – can rest, connect, and access multilingual support. At its heart are volunteers with lived experience of gig work and migration, offering peer-led care and pathways to essential services.

Driven by thousands of volunteer hours, GWH has pioneered a model that combines grassroots engagement with strategic collaboration. It partners with government, unions, and community organisations to deliver trusted support and influence systemic change. These partnerships ensure workers receive practical help while institutions gain insights into unsafe conditions and minimal protections, shaping reforms that improve lives.

By bridging divides between riders, volunteers, and policymakers, the Gig Workers' Hub demonstrates how volunteer-led action can deliver structural change.



"When it comes to volunteering there's great value in giving to others, but when it's community members giving to each other... I think that's the most powerful."
– Andrew Copolov (Founder, Gig Workers' Hub)

VOLUNTEER LEADERSHIP AWARD

Mohamed Al Abri

Mohamed has dedicated over 16 years to volunteering in the LGBTIQ+ space including 3 years supporting LGBTIQ+ refugees.

He has led two community sponsorship groups, helping queer refugees settle in Australia, access housing, and continue their education in their first year. He also volunteers for Thorne Harbour Health in LGBTIQ+ sexual health education, with Living Positive Victoria as a public speaker, and with Queer Arabs Australia and Queer Muslims Naarm, using photography as a tool to amplify marginalised voices.

Through his deep commitment to intersectional inclusion, Mohamed has created safe spaces and led transformative change, driven by a deep sense of justice and community care.



Finalists:

Brendan Daynes

Fred Alale AM

Greg Sher

Michelle Maxa

Sahar Ghaly

Sue Viney

VOLUNTEER IMPACT AWARD

Andrew Copolov

Andrew is the Founder of Gig Workers' Hub, a first-of-its-kind initiative that supports Victoria's delivery workers.

Since 2022, he has volunteered over 4,000 hours to create a safe, welcoming space where riders can access amenities, targeted services, and a place to rest and socialise.

By building trust within the community and forging partnerships with government and service providers, Andrew's dedication has strengthened support for riders and amplified their voices in the wider community.



Finalists: Keely Hamilton Norm Duell Shashank Jain Veronica Hill

VOLUNTEER COMMITMENT AWARD

Glenys Watts

Glenys is a proud Gunaikurnai Elder, respected community leader and role model.

For more than thirty years she has dedicated her time and energy to volunteering, making an extraordinary difference in Indigenous health, social and emotional wellbeing. She has been a driving voice in the Dhelk Dja – Safe Our Way family violence strategy, always advocating for culturally safe responses and services.

Glenys is deeply committed to truth-telling and cultural preservation. Through her leadership in the Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation, she continues to strengthen culture, protect Country and create opportunities for the Gippsland Gunaikurnai community.



Finalists: Bill Lawler Leanne Peterson Linda Widdup Rob Humphrys Roseanne Pirrottina Satbir Singh Thanh-Kham Tran-Dang OAM

YOUNG VOLUNTEER AWARD

Thomas Volpe

At just 10 years of age, Thomas demonstrates remarkable resilience and dedication through volunteering with the Kids with Cancer Foundation.

Following personal loss, Thomas channelled his grief into helping others, assembling care packs to bring comfort and joy to children undergoing cancer treatment. His innovative fundraising efforts helped raise over \$288,000 in just two years, with more pledged in his late father's honour.

Thomas' ability to inspire others, lead by example, and turn adversity into action reflects a deep commitment to making a difference well beyond his years.



Finalists: Christine Tolotchkov Clancy Quirk Hoang Cam Vi Vo Rumaysa Salman Sebastiano Patti

INCLUSIVE VOLUNTEERING AWARD

STEM Sisters

STEM Sisters is dedicated to advancing equity in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) by empowering Women of Colour through inclusive, volunteer-led programs.

Rooted in lived experience, STEM Sisters provides culturally safe spaces and leadership pathways for international students, migrants, and refugee women in Victoria. From mentoring and school outreach to publishing and public speaking, our 250+ volunteers co-design and deliver initiatives that challenge systemic barriers, increase representation, and build an intersectional movement for change.

STEM Sisters exemplifies how inclusive volunteering can drive sustainable, community-led transformation in Australia’s STEM ecosystem.



Finalists: Asylum Seeker Resource Centre
 BreastScreen Victoria

Humane Animal Rescue
 Rehmat Sandhu Foundation

Women’s Federation for World Peace

VOLUNTEERING INNOVATION AWARD

What Were You Wearing? Australia

What Were You Wearing (WWYW) Australia is a volunteer-led charity dedicated to ending domestic, family, and sexual violence (DFSV).

The organisation leads national rallies, runs healing groups for victim-survivors, and drives systemic change through education and advocacy. With the largest social media following of any DFSV organisation in Australia (reaching more than 500,000 people), WWYW amplifies survivor voices nationwide.

Its groundbreaking work includes successfully advocating for mandatory drink spiking training within the Responsible Service of Alcohol (RSA) framework, helping to create safer communities. As a victim-survivor-led movement, WWYW continues to build awareness, accountability, and pathways to healing.



- Finalists:**
- First Step
 - Royal Flying Doctor Service (Victoria)
 - Sunbury and Cobaw Community Health
 - Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service
 - Wyndham Bright Young Leaders

VOLUNTEERING PARTNERSHIPS AWARD

Gig Workers' Hub

The Gig Workers' Hub (GWH) is Australia's first dedicated space for food delivery riders, a workforce often overlooked despite being essential to city life.

Founded in 2022, it provides a safe, welcoming environment where riders – many international students or recent migrants – can rest, connect, and access support in their own languages.

At its heart are volunteers with lived experience of delivery work and migration who offer peer-led care, practical support, and pathways to other services.

The Hub has influenced policy, reduced isolation, and built solidarity across cultures, showing how peer-led action can transform wellbeing for Victoria's most vulnerable workers.



Finalists: Buloke and Northern Grampians Landcare Network

Candlebark Community Nursery

The Water Well Project

GRASSROOTS VOLUNTEERING AWARD

The Sisterhood Project

The Sisterhood Project, founded by volunteers Grace and Skye Larson, is a not-for-profit delivering free baby and child first-aid courses across Victoria, prioritising rural, regional, and under-served communities.

It also provides the 'All Hands Lifesaver' app nationwide, making lifesaving skills accessible to all. By removing barriers like transport, childcare, and language access, the organisation empowers families with practical, evidence-based skills to act confidently in emergencies.

Its mission is to prevent childhood deaths from preventable accidents and illnesses, including respiratory disease, by equipping caregivers with lifesaving knowledge.



Finalists: Good Grub Club Daylesford Lions Club of Yarrawonga She Won't Be Right Mate Unity Libyan Youth Association



2025 Victorian Volunteering Awards – Nominations

We would like to acknowledge and thank all nominees for their passion, dedication and commitment to their community.

Individual Awards Nominations

Abbey Shepherd
Abiola Akinbiyi
Abulfazl Zaki
Adrian Ferris
Adriel Appathurai
Ahmad El Hawli
Alexina Chalmers
Alison Donaldson
Alison Erica De Vries
Amal Alsamara
Amber Lin
Ammar Jahfar
Ana Adams
Andrew Copolov
Andrew Wolfe
Angela Hart
Anne Vinicombe
Annette Bedford
Annette Buckland

Anthony Hanna
Aristea Havelas
Arnold Cuadra
Arun Thomas
Athanas Alexopoulos
Barbara Bedford
Barbara Chappell
Barbara Counihan
Barry Rogers
Bashir Fayaq
Becker Abdou
Benjamin Chesler
Bernard Cole-Sinclair
Beryl Hadlow
Betty Howell
Bill Lawler
Bill Patterson
Billee Amsden
Bishal Kunwar

Branka Loukas
Brendan Daynes
Brendon Noonan
Bronwyn Worrall
Bryan Roberts
Caitlyn Tuohy
Carmel Kozolup
Cecilia Xu
Chanchal Kumavat
Chantelle Barillaro
Charlie Mead
Chris Christofi
Christine Tolotchkov
Christine Williams
Christopher Standing
Clancy Quirk
Clive Wood
Coen Buck-Roberts
Colleen Marke

Coral Cole
Corey Rawlinson
Courtney Buchanan
Craig Iskov
Daniel Dodoo
Daniel Fleming
Daniela Maslen
Darcy Paterson
Darryl Drake
David Jewell
David Whelan
Dayne Winkel
Dean Wallin
Deepak Vinayak
Devika Chaudhary
Diana Sze-Hong
Diane Walton
Diem Le
Divya Pasupuleti

Don Macwhirter
Donna Levinson-Murray
Dot Mc'Neill
Dr Sarvesh Soni
Edward Le
Elena Semenova
Elizabeth Nash
Enid Simpson
Erin Weegberg
Eufemia (Emi) Luppino
Eva McGowan
Farahnaz Sultani
Fathiya Benzeglam
Fiona Dinner
Fiona Phillips
Fred Alale AM
Gary Burgess
Gary Carter
Gary Sternberg



Individual Awards Nominations (cont.)

Gay Huggard
Gayle Thomas
Geoff Parkes
Geva Kramer
Glenn Mercer
Glenys Watts
Goldy Vidovic
Greg Huggins
Greg Jackson
Greg Sher
Gurdarshan Singh
Hanh Tran
Hani Pito
Hanife Opoz
Harley Burastero
Harley Elliott
Harriet Waymark
Hayley Bauer
Helen Jones
Hilary Warrington
Hoang Cam Vi Vo
Ian Watson
Ilona Fur
Inass Shegaf
Jack Mitchell

Jacqueline Kelly
Jacqueline Mazloun
James Warr
Jan Parker
Jane Hantanto
Jasper Francis
Jay de Graaff
Jean Odonaghue
Jenny Baker
Jess Holmes
Jian Min Li
Jijun (Jack) Yang
Joanne Ferguson
Joanne Watkins
John Abbott
John Kenwright
John Mathet
Joseph Tran
Judy Martin OAM
Julie Cattlin
Julie Seccull
Justine Azzopardi
Justine Higgins
Kafia Ibrahim
Kai Davenport

Karen Lasky
Karolina Sevcikova
Kateryna Tetukhina
Kathleen Jagger
Kathleen Morrison
Kathryn MacDonald
Katie Davies
Keeley Johnson
Keely Hamilton
Kellie Goldspink
Kerry Clayton
Kevin Doyle
Kevin Kramer
Kiara-Chell Quick
Kiera Laurie
Kim Stringer
Krishnil Kumar
Kristina Tolotchkov
Krystle Northover
Lachlan McMahon
Lauren Fisher
Lauren Wolfe
Leanne Campbell
Leanne Peterson
Leeanne Keam

Lena Tupua
Lesley McCarthy
Linda Widdup
Liz Bullen
Lou Ridsdale
Luisa Ballestrino
Lyn Geer
Macey Norman
Mackenzie o'Connor
Madeline (Del) Jordan
Maree Parnell
Margaret Fairhurst
Margaret Stewart
Marie-Camille Repecaud
Mark Dunn
Mark Ryan
Matthew Pavlic
Maureen Fowler
Meg Pargeter
Melinda Binding
Melissa Hamer
Michael Carter
Michael Doherty
Michael Hawking
Michael Inturrisi

Michelle Ellicott
Michelle Ford
Michelle Galea
Michelle Harris
Michelle Maxa
Mick Trim
Milon Islam
Mohamed Al Abri
Mona Fleming
Munia Badi
Murad Mamiyo
Myrna Rubio
Nahla Khidhir
Natalie Harrsion
Nathanael Nunag
Nawal Moudgil
Nazir Yousafi
Neil Power
Nhu Y Nguyen
Nicole Bester
Norm Duell
Norma McGrillen
Norman McMurtrie
Nyanjimma Koang
Olivia Connors



Individual Awards Nominations (cont.)

Patricia Culliver	Robert Wreith	Simon Lewis	Tom Maher
Patrick Natoli	Rod Cahill	Simone Dawson	Tracey Ruse
Paul Birman	Rohit Kumar	Simone Ritchie	Tracy Herbert
Paul Bryne-Moroney	Roseanne Pirrottina	Simrat Bains	Troy Matthews
Paul Sirianni	Rouba Saoud	Sonia Goubran	Ursula Jaehner
Paul Williams	Rumaysa Salman	Staszek Koczwar	Val Sullivan
Paulus Andri Husado	Russell Jaffe	Stephen Bentley	Veronica Hill
Penelope Forde	Ryan O'Shannessy	Stephen Crellin	Vivienne Harkness
Perry Neil	Sahar Ghaly	Stephen Manning	Wynette McCaskill
Peter Stones	Samantha Bradfield	Stephen Neff	Zainab Adan
Petkana Parmakovska	Samone Cranston	Steve Crosling	Zainab Ssakhizada
Quyen Nguyen	Sana Affan Hashmi	Stuart Tolliday	Zakir Hussain
Raju Adhikari	Sandra Anderson	Suada Sokolovic	Zygmunt Bielinski
Ranjit Gajendra	Sandra Johnstone	Sue Viney	
Ravi Sud	Sarah Chong	Sukhvinder Duggal	
Rebecca Underwood	Sarah Crowley	Sulaiman Anwarzai	
Renee Mascurine	Sarah Kelly	Syed Affan Ali Hashmi	
Renuka Vijayakumaran	Sasha McIntyre	Syeda Aliya Hashmi	
Rex Ashenden	Satbir Singh	Syeda Amna Hashmi	
Rhonda Carpenter	Sean Kerris	Terry Lack	
Richard Castell	Sebastiano Patti	Thanh-Kham Tran-Dang OAM	
Rob Humphrys	Sharon Harris	Thiri Han	
Robert Fairweather	Shashank Jain	Thomas Volpe	
Robert Gilson	Shugoofa Bakhtary	Thompson Nguyen	
Robert Williams	Silviano Amadeo	Timothy (Tim) Harte	



Organisation Awards Nominations

A Better Life For Foster Kids
ABC Disability Group
Albury Wodonga Regional FoodShare
Anika Legal
Ararat Neighbourhood House
Asylum Seeker Resource Centre
Australian Integrated Fijian Association of Victoria
Australian Multicultural Women Association
Beyond Zero Emissions
Blessing Bags Melbourne
Bread Hub Vic
BreastScreen Victoria
Buloke and Northern Grampians Landcare Network
Candlebark Community Nursery
Community Relations Group - The Smith Family
COOK4CALD
Court Network
Dallas Neighbourhood House
Dawoodi Bohra Community
Dementia Alliance

Emerald Village Association
EV Strengthening Communities
Every One Cafe at Amstel Club
First Step (ResetLife)
Foothills Community Care
Frankston District Tigersharks
Friend in Me
Gig Workers' Hub
GO Again Op Shop (Goulburn Options Inc)
Good Grub Club Daylesford
Happy Healthy Kids Euroa
Hazara Shamama Association of Victoria
Humane Animal Rescue
Interchange Gippsland
IPC Health
Keeleys Cause
Lions Club of Seymour Goulburn
Lions Club of Yarrawonga (Turban Angels)
Maffra Municipal Band
Maroondah Reservoir Friends of Group

Maryborough Volunteer Resource Group
Miscarriage Information Support Service
Nasho Fair Go
Off Your Back
Omeo Community Hall & Hub CoM
Play On Wheelchair Basketball Program
Port Fairy Surf Life Saving Club
Port Phillip Community Group
Queenscliffe Historical Museum Inc
Rehmat Sandhu Foundation
Reventon
Riding for the Disabled Shepparton
Rotary Club of Flemington Kensington
Rotary Inner Melbourne Emergency Relief Network
Royal Flying Doctor Service Victoria (Memory Lane)
Sea Shepherd Australia
Second Chance Animal Rescue
SES Kilmore
Sgufa Bakhtary
Share The Dignity



Organisation Awards Nominations (cont.)

She Won't Be Right Mate
Sri Lankan Association in Geelong
St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria
STEM Sisters
Sunbury and Cobaw Community Health
Sunshine and Western Region Sports Club
Tarneit Business Association
The Motivation Project (The Women's Spirit Project)
The NCJW (Victoria) Social Support Trust
The Sisterhood Project
The Water Well Project
Thorne Harbour Health
Transit Soup Kitchen and Food Support
Uniting Vic Tas
Unity Libyan Youth Association
University of the Philippines Alumni in Victoria
Victoria State Emergency Service
Victoria State Emergency Service - Cobram Unit
Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service (VALS)
Victorian International Optimist Dinghy Association
Warrnambool Neighbourhood Community Centre
WE Listen Suicide Loss Support Group
What Were You Wearing? Australia
Women 4 STEM
Women's Federation for World Peace
Wyld Work
Wyndham Bright Young Leaders
Xavier Social Justice Network - Xavier College
Yackandandah and District Historical Society