

Media release

Award recipients announced at
Volunteering Victoria 2017 State Awards

Volunteering Victoria announced seven recipients at its annual **State Awards** held in Queen's Hall at State Parliament House on Wednesday 22 November 2017.

The Volunteering Victoria State Awards showcase the significant and enduring impact Victoria's leaders of volunteers, volunteering programs and volunteer involving organisations have on building a vibrant and strong volunteering community.

Nominations were once again of a high calibre and covered a diverse breadth of volunteering programs and volunteer involving organisations across the state, as well as highlighting some remarkable leaders of volunteers.

"We are proud to celebrate the outstanding achievements of all the nominees and congratulate the finalists and recipients in these, our third State Awards.

As the State's peak body, Volunteering Victoria proudly honours the dedicated work by these volunteer managers and volunteer-involving organisations in the delivery of volunteering programs that demonstrate the pinnacle of excellence and innovation in the sector," Roz Wollmering, Interim CEO, Volunteering Victoria.

In 2016, the total value of volunteering was estimated to contribute between \$24.9 and \$31 billion to the Victorian economy, reflecting the power of volunteering. It supports all facets of our community including health, community services, sport, emergency services, arts and culture, tourism, multicultural communities, youth, ageing and disability services and is critical to building community resilience and social cohesion and connectedness.

Roz Wollmering gratefully thanked sponsors and supporters - SEEK Volunteer ANZ and the Victorian State Government through the Department of Health and Human Services - for making these awards possible. She acknowledged the support of the Parliament of Victoria, in particular The Hon. Bruce Atkinson MLC, President of the Legislative Council and The Hon. Colin Brooks MP, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly. Thanks also went to Photographer, Frank Amato for his ongoing support of Volunteering Victoria.

The Awards Judges were also acknowledged for their time and commitment including Dr. Christopher Baker, Research Fellow, Centre for Social Impact, Swinburne University; Con O'Brien, Board of Directors, Volunteering Victoria; Helen Yorston JP, Manager, Bendigo Volunteer Resource Centre; Rebecca Miller, Head of SEEK Volunteer ANZ; and Simone Power, Corporate Partnerships Manager, Melbourne City Mission.

Notable guests included The Hon. Bruce Atkinson MLC, President of the Legislative Council and the Master of Ceremonies for the State Awards; Gabrielle Williams, Parliamentary Secretary for Carers and Volunteers. Parliamentary Secretary for Health; Cindy McLeish, Shadow Assistant Minister for Environment, Communities and Volunteers; Colleen Hartland, Member of the Legislative Council, Representative of the Victorian Greens; Jennifer Pascoe, Department of Health and Human Services; Katrina Hudson, Manager Seek Volunteer ANZ; Rebecca Miller, Head of SEEK Volunteer ANZ; Paul Wheelton AM and Angela Wheelton, Wheelton Philanthropy and the Volunteering Victoria Board of Directors.

2017 VOLUNTEERING VICTORIA STATE AWARD RECIPIENTS

EXCELLENCE AWARD

Awarded to an **individual manager or leader of volunteers** or a **Volunteer Involving Organisation** for demonstrating a commitment to going beyond best practice volunteer management.

RECIPIENT: Very Special Kids

Very Special Kids (VSK) provides a unique volunteering experience in paediatric palliative care, end of life care and bereavement support. A potentially daunting area in which to volunteer, the organisation is committed at every level to going above and beyond to ensure the best volunteer experience possible for the 800 plus volunteers.

Their success in implementing *The National Standards for Volunteer Involvement* was reflected in the results of the most recent annual Volunteer Survey whereby 100% of volunteers indicated that they would recommend VSK to someone looking to volunteer. The results also highlighted that 95% of volunteers rated their overall volunteer experience as *excellent* whilst the remaining 5% rated it as *good*.

INCLUSION AWARD

Awarded to a **Volunteering Program** that achieves the inclusion of individuals or groups who are often excluded from the mainstream or traditional volunteering. Inclusion can be with respect to any groups within society that characteristically experience disadvantage, isolation or discrimination, including but not restricted to CALD communities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, people with disability, the aged, gender or sexual identity groups, recent migrants and refugees.

RECIPIENT: Afghan and Tamil Volunteers, enliven

enliven works alongside members of the local Afghan and Tamil communities to improve health and wellbeing. Community leaders were instrumental in the development of a volunteer-led peer education program whereby enliven trained volunteers to deliver health promotion to members of their community in language and in community settings. A total of 10 Afghan and 5 Tamil volunteers dedicated their time to attend training; participate in consultations; promote project activities; and deliver health information to community members. Their volunteering efforts demonstrated their ongoing commitment to empowering community members to have good health.

EMPLOYEE VOLUNTEERING AWARD

Awarded to an organisation that delivers a specific, significant, sustained and successful benefit to one or more volunteer involving organisation through its employee volunteering program. The volunteering contribution may include general or skilled volunteering including pro-bono work.

RECIPIENT: Employee Volunteer Program, AIA

AIA have an exemplary employee volunteering program, as evidenced by their long and substantial commitment to employees volunteering with Sacred Heart Primary School through a partnership with Ardoch Youth Foundation. In the past 5 years over 150 AIA employees have volunteered at the school - writing letters to students, visiting the school, hosting class visits at the AIA office, attending the full school beach excursion and Learning Through Lunch at a local training restaurant. Their impact has been substantial on the school as a whole and on the individual students.

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP AWARD

Awarded to a **researcher and / or a practitioner** who make significant contributions to the advancement of knowledge or research regarding volunteering, in particular (but not limited to) volunteering leadership and management

RECIPIENT: Dr. Pam Kappelides, La Trobe University

Dr Kappelides highly developed research and training skills have resulted in the development of a resource that contributes important practical knowledge to the field of volunteering; in particular, the sport, recreation and disability sectors. The knowledge developed from her 25 year track record of volunteering research was articulated in the resource, which aims to improve volunteer opportunities among volunteers in the not-for-profit sector, inclusion for people with a disability in volunteering and improve volunteer management procedures and practices throughout programs and services across Victoria.

Dr Kappelides research addresses an important void evident in both the research and practitioner focused literature, and provides a useful education and training resource to support the many thousands of sport and recreation agencies, associations and clubs that provide programs and services for people with a disability through volunteers.

INNOVATION AWARD

Awarded to a **Volunteer Involving Organisation** for an innovative, unique volunteering program or model that engages volunteers, and makes a significant contribution to the work of the volunteer involving organisation, improving its ability to achieve its purpose and objectives, and to deliver positive outcomes.

RECIPIENT: Human Rights Law Program Fast Track Clinics, Asylum Seeker Resource Centre

In May 2017 the Australian Government announced that approximately 7,500 people across Australia had until 1 October 2017 to submit their protection claims. Many of the people effected by the announcement had been living in Australia since 2012 and had been repeatedly denied the right to seek asylum.

The deadline impacted many people who were already involved in legal processes but were stuck in queues of underfunded legal services struggling to meet already surging demand.

With a dedicated team of volunteers, the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre mobilised legal clinics, assisting nearly 1,000 people to lodge their claims between May – August 2017.

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Awarded to a paid or unpaid leader or manager of volunteers for long-standing, distinguished and meritorious service to the volunteering sector in a leadership role over at least seven years.

RECIPIENTS: Tehree Gordon, Jirrahlinga Koala and Wildlife Sanctuary **AND**
Hazel Maynard, Volunteering Victoria

Tehree Gordon, Jirrahlinga Koala and Wildlife Sanctuary

Tehree's passion is to help people and wildlife and has been un-waiving during her 60 years as a volunteer.

Tehree and husband Hamish opened *Jirrahlinga Koala and Wildlife Sanctuary* over forty years ago to rescue and rehabilitate injured, distressed and orphaned wildlife whilst at the same time providing a haven for disadvantaged people of all ages. At *Jirrahlinga*, visitors find peace, purpose and tranquillity. During this time she has recruited and trained hundreds of volunteers and made a significant contribution to the volunteer movement within the Geelong region and beyond.

In 2015/2016 alone, Tehree assisted approximately 40 people including long term unemployed, victims of domestic violence, and people suffering from various mental health illnesses.

She has been instrumental in training and developing volunteers from Australian and overseas volunteer organisations such as *Oceans to Earth*.

Tehree and her husband Hamish have also been committed foster carers to 41 young and troubled youths over the last 30 years.

Hazel Maynard, Volunteering Victoria

Hazel has spent 26 years championing the cause of volunteers and refugees. Her work at multiple leading not-for-profit organisations has seen Hazel successfully lead many volunteer programs.

Whilst at Red Cross, Hazel developed and managed a support service for asylum seekers; at the Cancer Council she developed a state-wide volunteer program; and at St Vincent de Paul she developed and nurtured a geographically dispersed volunteer community resulting in improved retention rates and a highly regarded, effective and engaging volunteer program.

She was a board member of Volunteering Victoria from 2006 – 2010, during which time she held the role of President for two years. She is an honorary member of Volunteering Australia, a published author and has represented various organisations on multiple Boards and Committees.

ABOUT VOLUNTEERING VICTORIA

Volunteering Victoria is the state peak body for volunteering. Our vision is for resilient communities and empowered and active citizens through volunteering.

Though our dynamic and transformative leadership, we work to promote and build a vibrant, prosperous and strong volunteering community that is inclusive, respected and sustainable.

Volunteering Victoria is a member-based organisation, supported by a dedicated and highly professional team of staff and volunteers. From broad sectors such as social services, health, sport, culture, emergency services and local government, our membership reflects the diversity of people and organisations that work with and support volunteers in our community.

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