



Inclusive Volunteering VIO Awards

In 2022 EV Strengthening Communities (VMA5 Lead) met with key priority group stakeholders to address the objective of building capacity within Volunteer Involving Organisations (VIO's) to deliver inclusive volunteering opportunities.

The regional strategy developed included the delivery of the ***Inclusive Volunteering Awards*** to celebrate VIO best practice and to establish peer-based learning on inclusion within the Eastern region. The inaugural ***Inclusive Volunteering Awards*** debuted on 1 May 2024, and were presented at the IVA conference which was attended by 120 people.

There were 28 applications from a diverse range of VIO's at various stages of implementing inclusive volunteering programs. There were 8 organisations who received an award for being an Inclusive Volunteering Workplace for 2024. The judging panel assessed these organisations, as having met 80% or more of the selection criteria. These 8 presented their work at the Awards conference.

8 Awarded Inclusive Volunteering workplaces for 2024 are (in alphabetical order):

- Asylum Seeker Resource Centre
- Baptcare
- Feed One Feed All
- Foothills Community Care Inc.
- Melbourne AMEP Volunteer Tutor Scheme
- Newhope Baptist Church
- Puffing Billy Railway
- Wellways Australia

In addition, the following organisations received a certificate for working towards being an Inclusive workplace for 2024 (in alphabetical order):

- Australia Chin Community (Eastern Melbourne) Inc.
- Ben's Place
- Benwerren
- Carenet
- Community First Responders Foundation Ltd
- Ferntree Gully Tennis Club
- Living and Learning at Ajani Inc
- Manningham Walking Group For Carers
- Maroondah Winter Shelter

- Melbourne All-Abilities Lions Club
- MiCare Ltd
- Mooroolbark community Garden
- Mountain District Radio Inc 3MDR
- MVC Boxing
- Neuma Church
- Ringwood Church of Christ-
- Temple Society Australia- CHAMPION Community Hub
- The Boroondara Family Network
- Women Support Incorporated
- Yarra Ranges Council TAC L2P Program

Each organisation received 2 decals for their organisation [depending upon the status they attained] to display and a certificate of attainment.

The feedback from participants at the event was overwhelmingly positive and inspirational – that “hearing the stories of how VIO’s developed their programs to become inclusive was just inspirational”.

“The energy in the room was electric and conversations buzzing with hope. As a migrant woman of colour and faith, I find it heart warming that the messages of Diversity and Inclusion are meaningful. That we are on the path of reaching out to the Hardly Reached Voices rather than dismissing as Hard To Reach. That we are being flexible, adapting to all ages, genders, abilities, faiths and cultures, being truly intersectional. That we welcome all Volunteers as having a seat on the table , treating each other with respect.”

“This was a great inaugural event to recognise the work organisations are doing to be inclusive. It was great that all nominees were awarded and recognised. It was great to network with other organisations and to learn about their achievements through their presentations. Overall it was a great award ceremony to attend and look forward to attending the next ”

“Really impressed with the day, found the keynote engaging and the organisations who gave presentations were inspiring, provided information from varied perspectives and I think each person in the room would have gained some practical knowledge to take back to their organisation. It was also clear that the event was extremely well organised, kudos to the team”

We will be working with all award winners to highlight their great work and share their journeys to celebrate and inspire others to become more inclusive in their volunteer programs.