

MEDIA RELEASE

THURSDAY 5 DECEMBER 2013

ITALIAN SENIOR CELEBRATES AFTER PREMIER'S RECOGNITION

After more than 40 years of service to multicultural communities across Victoria, last night Ascot Vale resident Frank Di Blasi was awarded the Premier's Award for Community Harmony at a special ceremony at Government House.

More than 70 people from an array of backgrounds and 23 organisations were recognised for their achievements at the Victorian Multicultural Commission (VMC) 2013 Multicultural Awards for Excellence.

Frank won the prestigious award for his extensive professional and volunteer work supporting aged and frail Italians, beginning at the Victorian Italian Welfare Agency in the late 1970s.

VMC Chairperson, Mr Chin Tan said the awards recognise the efforts of people who work hard to bring together Victorians from more than 200 backgrounds and 135 faiths.

"Since arriving in Australia from Italy in 1962, Frank has been a pivotal figure for a large part of the Victorian community," Mr Tan said.

"He pioneered Italian senior citizen clubs in around Moonee Ponds and leads his community to unite with Victoria's diverse cultures and faiths.

"Frank helped established an invaluable organisation almost every decade; the Kensington Soccer Club in the 1970s, the Association of Senior Italian Citizens Clubs of Victoria in the 1980s and in 2000, the Avondale Heights and East Keilor Residents' Association.

"Through the Multicultural Awards for Excellence, the VMC thanks contributors who go above and beyond to make a difference for Victoria's multicultural communities, whether they be from emerging refugee communities or larger and more established communities.

"Knowing that Victoria's elderly Italian community continue to need support and celebration, Frank, himself aged 69 years, continues to generously donate up to 40 hours a week helping Catholic groups across Melbourne and running seminars," he said.

Mr Tan said the prestigious awards attracted more than 200 nominations across 10 categories, showing the breadth and support of people who make Victoria a great place to live.

“The annual Awards for Excellence confirm the Victorian Government’s commitment to promoting Victoria as a multicultural place, with His Excellency the Honourable Alex Chernov AC QC, Governor of Victoria and the Premier of Victoria, the Honourable Denis Naphine presenting awards,” he said.

Awards were also presented by the Minister for Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship Nicholas Kotsiras, Minister for Local Government Jeanette Powell, Minister for Education Martin Dixon, and Chief Commissioner of Police Ken Lay.

For a complete list of winners in this and previous years, please visit:
www.multicultural.vic.gov.au

Media enquiries:

Carol Nichols, VMC Communications and Events Manager
(03) 9651 0649 or carol.nichols@vmc.vic.gov.au