

## MEDIA RELEASE

THURSDAY 5 DECEMBER 2013

### **GRASS ROOTS AFRICAN GROUP RECOGNISED AT GOVERNMENT HOUSE**

Africa Day Australia are experts in bringing people together to celebrate, but today they celebrated themselves, as one of only two Ambassador Award winners in the Victorian Multicultural Commission (VMC) 2013 Multicultural Awards for Excellence.

At a special ceremony at Government House, Minister for Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship Nicholas Kotsiras presented the rising community group the award for initiating and running a successful festival of African culture.

VMC Chairperson, Mr Chin Tan said the awards recognise the efforts of more than 70 people and 23 organisations who tirelessly support and celebrate Victorians from more than 250 backgrounds and 130 faiths.

“This year we are pleased to see new and emerging African communities recognised for their contributions, with Africa Day Australia sharing the Ambassador Award with Somali born Ahmed Dini,” Mr Tan said.

“Africa Day Australia turned a grand vision into reality when they attracted hundreds of people to a series of events to celebrate Africa Day; an annual commemoration of 54 African countries who fought for their freedom and in 1963 formed the African Union.

“Africa Day Australia showed a strong stance to confront stereotypes and support positive images, stories and ambitions of African Australians in Victoria.

“Together with around 40 partners, they increased awareness of Victoria’s diverse African community, with forums on human rights and two inaugural big events: the Africa Day Friendship Cup with the North Melbourne Football Club and Africa’s Got Talent, with judges including Deni Hines.

Mr Tan said the Multicultural Awards for Excellence, was an opportunity to thank outstanding groups like Africa Day Australia, who go above and beyond to make a difference for Victoria’s multicultural communities.

“From the Gala Dinner at North Melbourne Town Hall to the Emerge in the West Festival with Multicultural Arts Victoria, Africa Day Australia included both young and old and is a role model for small groups hoping to achieve big things,” he said.

Mr Tan said the prestigious awards attracted more than 200 nominations, showing the breadth of support for 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 Napthine presenting awards,” he said.

Awards were also presented by the 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](http://www.multicultural.vic.gov.au)

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