

Award Winners

Outstanding Individual Achievement Award

Mr George Chin (Mr Vun Chin)

An active and devoted advocate for the Chinese community, Mr Vun “George” Chin is recognised for his sustained and valuable contribution to our state in many ways, and with tangible impact. Upon arriving in Adelaide in 1992 he started a small business in Chinatown that developed over 25 years. During that time, he was instrumental in the rejuvenation of the Chinatown precinct. As an executive member of the Chinatown Adelaide committee, George helped conceive the hugely successful Chinatown Lunar New Year Street Party, one of Adelaide’s major multicultural festivals attracting more than 30 000 visitors annually.

His leadership has been felt in many ways – from representing his community at the Premier’s appeal to raise money to send athletes to compete at the 2008 Beijing Olympics, to his ambassadorship of the OzAsia Festival, he is known for being hands-on, even organising dragon boat races and calligraphy workshops.

George served for seven years on the Board of StudyAdelaide, helping to formulate strategies to promote Adelaide as a study destination for international students. He has also served as a member of the South Australian Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs Commission from July 2018 to 30 June 2021. He currently serves on the South Australian Multicultural Commission.

His list of other voluntary roles and advisory positions are too numerous to canvas here – suffice to say Vun “George” Chin is a worthy winner of the outstanding individual achievement award category for his lengthy and outstanding contribution to South Australia’s multicultural community.

Arts and Culture Award

Mr Farhan Shah

Mr Farhan Shah has distinguished himself as a high calibre artist in the Sufi tradition, who is using his talent to inspire and connect people not just in South Australia, but nationally and internationally through the global language of music. Dubbed the “Pakistani Pavarotti” he is now sharing his talents with children, by developing a community-based music curriculum. This aims to introduce young people to the beauty of music and foster intercultural understanding and acceptance in the young, thereby encouraging future generations to grow together in harmony.

Community Sector Award

Workskil Australia

Finding a job can be an important milestone for migrants and refugees. In the past two years, Workskil Australia has supported more than 4000 culturally and linguistically diverse South Australians in their quest for work, placing more than 1200 into employment.

Headquartered in Adelaide, Workskil Australia is an exemplar of diversity. Twenty percent of its 750 staff were born overseas in 35 different countries, and 13 per cent speak a language other than English as their first language. The not-for-profit charity also offers on-going support and mentoring programs to boost independence, economic and social self-reliance as migrants and refugees navigate their new life in Australia.

Media Award

Mrs Theodora Maios

Theodora Maios is a journalist whose body of work reflects the contemporary lives of Greek Australians. For the past seven years at Neos Kosmos, she has embedded herself in the business, community and creative sectors, helping connect a multicultural community that has played a rich part in South Australia's cultural, historic, economic and social development.

Theodora's profiles on Greek South Australians have documented the heart of one of South Australia's most vibrant communities – from the untold stories of captains of industry, to those helping in fire relief efforts – and in doing so she has elevated the profile of South Australia's Greek community on a local, national and even global level.

Private Sector Award

Aussie Discount Chemist Group and TWCM Cumberland Park Pharmacy

Aussie Discount Chemist Group started in 2007, and with six pharmacies, is one of the largest family run pharmacy businesses in the state, with a focus on servicing customers from diverse cultural and social backgrounds. The Group has created more than 150 jobs in regional SA employing migrants from 18 different nationalities who speak 21 different languages – and assisted 35 pharmacists of different nationalities to settle in Australia.

During COVID-19 Aussie Discount Chemist started an innovative health program providing free flu vaccinations to new immigrants, international students, humanitarian entrants, and those residing in Australia due to border closures. Over 5000 flu vaccines and a further 500 Covid-19 vaccinations have been administered, helping to keep vulnerable people safe and healthy.

Public Sector Award

Multicultural Services, Department for Child Protection

Multicultural Services, Department for Child Protection (DCP) are a small unit within the South Australian Public Sector who are having a big impact. Their culturally responsive Child Placement Policy is one of the first of its kind in Australia and internationally, and prioritises the placement of children with carers of like cultural background.

Since its inception in 2012, they have affiliated with over 150 community organisations and have seen a 31 percent increase in Culturally and Linguistically Diverse placement requests. This has meant that children from multicultural backgrounds have the opportunity to stay connected to their heritage. Multicultural Services is applauded for its leadership community-focused change and its advocacy for addressing unique needs involving child safety.

Volunteer Award

Mr Esmatullah Ahmad Zadah – *joint winner*

After leaving Afghanistan, Esmatullah Zadah arrived in Bordertown in 2012. A dedicated and selfless member of the Hazara community, he has been an influential advocate in advising, leading and uniting the community. Esmatullah was instrumental in establishing the Tatiara Multicultural Group in 2019 and continues to this day spending endless hours developing its core values, roles, and constitution. He seeks no praise and resists the idea of being a leader, even though others hold him in such regard.

His informal services as a cultural advisor are invaluable to agencies who work with the Hazara community and Esmatullah is a trusted reference point for organisations such as the local council, Government agencies, migrant centre, and survivors of torture and trauma services.

Ms Ayesha Fariha Safdar – *joint winner*

In 2010, Ayesha Fariha Safdar founded the Adelaide Pakistani Women Association of South Australia with the aim of enriching the quality of life of Pakistani women living in South Australia. A full-time lecturer at TAFE SA and a mother of two children, she makes time in her busy life representing the Association at social and cultural events.

Ayesha regularly organises gatherings to encourage women to participate in community life to overcome isolation barriers and cultural shock after migrating to Australia. She is especially applauded for supporting Pakistani women to establish small businesses, giving housewives-turned-business entrepreneurs a confidence boost, and encouraging their integration into Australian society.

Senior Volunteer Award

Mrs Vjera Žuvela

Vjera Žuvela arrived in Australia in 1959 as a child, and at the tender age of 10 was already supporting her fellow Croatians as a skilled interpreter. Vjera has continued to actively contribute to her community for some 47 years. Vjera has represented the Croatian people in various capacities, including as a member of the Ethnic Community Council, and as a volunteer for Croatian Aged Care, a role she continues to this day. Vjera devotes 40 hours each month assisting the older community members to attend appointments, preparing meals, and making home visits. Vjera's contribution to volunteer services has been, and continues to be, exceptional.

Highly Commended Finalist

Mr Glen Woodward

Glen Woodward has contributed to Australian Japanese relations for more than 30 years. Glen hosts students from Japan and China and assists them in learning English. Glen received an award from the City of Adelaide for his long volunteer services to the community. Much of his life has been devoted to the citizens of South Australia.

Youth Award

Miss Neela Siva (Miss Suphaneela Sivakumaran)

Neela Siva came to Australia as a refugee when she was 13, fleeing an ethnic war with her mother and two younger siblings. Her family circumstances meant Neela became the family breadwinner. She overcame racism and bullying at school to excel academically and volunteered teaching Tamil language and dance at Adelaide Tamil School.

Since completing high school seven years ago, Neela has been actively fostering multiculturalism as a volunteer radio presenter and chief coordinator of Adelaide Tamil Broadcasting Service, managing about 45 volunteers. Neela is one of the youngest accredited Tamil interpreters in Australia and has helped other refugees during vulnerable situations such as police investigations and medical emergencies.