

## Winner Citations

### Outstanding Individual Achievement Award

#### Winner | Ms Marita Aldridge

Marita Aldridge has dedicated her career to advancing multiculturalism, strengthening social cohesion, and breaking down cultural, linguistic, and systemic barriers that prevent women of diverse backgrounds from accessing breast cancer screening.

For the past 18 years, she has directly supported more than 170,000 culturally and linguistically diverse women to access screening – an extraordinary achievement benefitting thousands of families and saving thousands of lives through early detection.

Marita has driven the translation of resources in 26 languages to ensure information is accessible and culturally meaningful, and travels to rural and remote South Australia to engage migrant women who are often isolated and face additional barriers to care.

A constant presence at multicultural events and festivals, Marita runs stalls and personally assists women to book appointments.

Marita devotes significant personal time building trust with communities and deepening her understanding of cultural and religious practices. She delivers metropolitan and regional education sessions to normalise breast screening and address cultural taboos.

Through her leadership, compassion, and determination, she has ensured access to breast screening for thousands of women who may otherwise have missed early cancer detection.

Marita Aldridge is presented with the Outstanding Individual Achievement Award for her commitment to multicultural inclusion, building stronger trust, fostering deeper intercultural understanding, and contributing to a health system that better serves all South Australian women.

#### Highly Commended Finalist | Mr Sam Garreffa

Sam Garreffa has served La Festa di San Giuseppe Association for 36 years, including 29 years as President, shaping the growth of one of South Australia's most enduring cultural and religious celebrations. He drove the establishment and management of the St Joseph Italian Community Centre, a welcoming venue for multicultural gatherings across Salisbury and northern Adelaide. At almost 80 years of age, he continues to contribute more than 25 voluntary hours each week.

### Regional Achievement Award

#### Winner | Mrs Suzanne Pepe

Tenison Woods College teacher Suzanne Pepe has supported Mount Gambier's multicultural community since 2014. She has developed trauma-informed programs enabling refugee students to learn English while adjusting, fostering safety, belonging and inclusion. Her support extends beyond school, providing emergency supplies, meals and advocating for cultural celebrations. In doing so she has helped reduce isolation, promoted trauma survivor recovery, and facilitated community integration, demonstrating exceptional dedication to refugees and multiculturalism in the region.

## Arts and Culture Award

### Joint Winner | Mrs Claudia Callisto

It all started with a book for Claudia Callisto, a memoir that amplified the voices of second and third generation Australian Italian women. 'The Good Italian Girl' has become an Amazon International Bestseller, also spawning a podcast and a one-woman Fringe Show.

In all these forms, Claudia Callisto has presented a strong cultural voice, encouraging reflections on cultural expectations, sisterhood, love, and identity. Claudia has honoured the women of the migration generation, while also celebrating those of subsequent generations navigating their identities in multicultural Australia.

### Joint Winner | Mr Yogi Devgan

Yogi Devgan is a visionary filmmaker, storyteller, and cultural advocate. He has brought often excluded voices from diverse and marginalised communities onto mainstream Australian screens through the award-winning Port Adelaide Diversity and Inclusion Film Festival.

In 2023, Yogi expanded his vision when he established the Australian Film Diversity and Inclusion Foundation with an inaugural festival at Wallis Cinemas. He has moved from a technically skilled graduate to an inclusive cultural leader in just a few years, with transformative results.

## Community Sector Award

### Winner | Baba Mazari Foundation

Founded in 2017 by young Afghan Hazara leaders, the Baba Mazari Foundation has grown into a respected voice for multiculturalism, inclusion, and community empowerment in South Australia. Through digital literacy projects, volunteer training, legal support and multicultural events, the Foundation has helped people from many backgrounds connect, learn, and participate fully in community life. Its partnerships and community driven approach reflect a genuine commitment to building a stronger and more inclusive South Australia.

## Media Award

### Winner | Umeewarra Aboriginal Media Association

The Umeewarra Aboriginal Media Association is a vital force in cultural preservation and education, uniting more than 40 Aboriginal cultures that call Port Augusta home. As an Aboriginal owned organisation, it showcases First Nations perspectives through events like NAIDOC Week and Umeewarra Downtown. Delivering radio, digital media, and youth programs, Umeewarra strengthens cultural pride and fosters understanding across South Australia. Its decades of leadership make it an outstanding champion of multicultural storytelling and celebration.

### Highly Commended Finalist | Mrs Vinaya Rai

For more than 25 years, Vinaya Rai has been a dedicated volunteer broadcaster and community leader, enriching South Australia through multilingual programs and intercultural dialogues. Her work at 5EBI – spanning Indian language broadcasting, multifaith programming and training emerging broadcasters – has empowered migrants and strengthened community voices.

## Private Sector Award

### Winner | Accor Group South Australia

The Accor Group has a national commitment to hiring refugees and migrants – and the South Australia team has established itself as the company's leading performer, employing more than 30 skilled workers in the past two years.

The team has achieved 12-month retention rates of 89 per cent, reflecting their active efforts to implement positive cultural training and inclusive practices across all aspects of the business. This has resulted in not only a thriving and fulfilling workplace, but also a better guest experience. The outstanding results of the team in South Australia have been used as an example for other states at Accor's national conference.

### Highly Commended Finalist | Mr Don Chen

Don Chen has spent more than two decades advocating for international students. In establishing the Adelaide Institute of Business and Technology and the Adelaide International School, he has both helped migrants familiarise themselves with Australian culture and encouraged local students to understand and accept new arrivals.

## Public Sector Award

### Winner | Interpreting and Translating Centre, Department of Human Services

For 50 years, the Department of Human Services' Interpreting and Translating Centre has provided invaluable assistance to people of diverse backgrounds, helping them access healthcare, legal, and other essential services, while supporting their connection with government departments.

More than just a language service, its professional interpreters and translators also provide invaluable guidance and support, often when clients are at their most vulnerable.

Each year, the Centre handles around 70,000 assignments, making a remarkable contribution to our state's cohesion.

### Highly Commended Finalist | City of Charles Sturt

The City of Charles Sturt is highly commended for fostering multicultural inclusion by engaging multicultural communities in its urban greening campaign.

Its pilot program involved the Vietnamese community in environmental projects to create cooler, more liveable suburbs. Such is its success, the council is set to extend consultations to other cultural groups.

## Volunteer Award

### Winner | Mrs Majabin Zaidi

Majabin Zaidi's dedicated, selfless and generous contribution to the sport of soccer as a volunteer and mentor has empowered countless women, fostered cohesion and strengthened communities. Further, she delivers food to people living with disabilities, connects new arrivals with settlement services, education, and employment, and supports the most vulnerable in the community. The judges were impressed by her deep commitment and tangible impact.

## Highly Commended Finalist | Mrs Esther Simbi

Esther Simbi is applauded for her charitable activities, including her dedicated support and advocacy for culturally diverse disability communities, informed by her own disability journey. She is also improving the lives of women in remote communities by assembling and distributing more than one thousand birthing kits for women and girls in developing nations across Africa and the Asia Pacific.

## Senior Volunteer Award

### Joint Winner | Mrs Barbara Boxer

For more than 25 years, Barbara Boxer has been a dedicated volunteer tutor with the Adelaide Migrant English Program at TAFE SA, helping countless new arrivals build their confidence in English and in everyday life. Her warmth, empathy, and creativity, including the popular 'umbrella chat' conversation sessions, has supported migrants from more than 25 countries to feel welcome and included. At 87, Barbara continues to volunteer twice a week, showing the true spirit of kindness, learning and community that enriches South Australia's multicultural story.

### Joint Winner | Mr Branimir Sprajcer

Branimir Sprajcer has devoted more than 60 years to serving the Croatian community and advancing multiculturalism in South Australia. From helping establish the Croatian Community Council and coordinating national youth leadership conferences to leading Australia's participation in the Croatian World Games, his vision has strengthened unity and pride across generations.

Through his recent work with the Croatian History Group and the Croatian Club's 75th Anniversary projects, Branimir continues to preserve community history, mentor younger leaders, and celebrate the enduring contributions of Croatian Australians to South Australia's cultural life.

## Youth Award

### Winner | Mr Go Suan Pau

Go Suan Pau is recognised for his outstanding leadership and unwavering commitment to multiculturalism, refugee advocacy, and community cohesion in South Australia. Through his work with Zomi Innkuan Adelaide and the Australia Myanmar Institute for Democracy, Human Rights and Peace, he has empowered communities, supported new arrivals, and strengthened cultural identity. His volunteer service with South Australia Police, TAFE SA, and national advocacy networks reflects his dedication to inclusion, intercultural understanding, and creating opportunities for others to thrive.