

Media Release

Hon Jacinta Allan MP
Premier



Thursday, 24 October 2024

RECOGNISING VICTORIA'S EXTRAORDINARY SENIORS

Award-winning psychiatrist and family violence prevention advocate Professor Manjula Datta O'Connor has won the prestigious Premier's Award for Victorian Senior of the Year for her tireless work in raising awareness about dowry abuse and family violence in Victoria.

Premier Jacinta Allan and Minister for Ageing Ingrid Stitt today recognised the dedication to community service and leadership of Professor O'Connor and 14 other recipients at Government House.

With more than 25 years of experience as a psychiatrist, Professor O'Connor co-founded the AustralAsian Centre for Human Rights and Health, spearheading research projects and community initiatives that have broken the silence on dowry abuse in Australia.

Professor O'Connor is the author of the bestselling book *Daughters of Durga*, which exposes the patriarchal structures and dowry abuse faced by women in Victoria's South Asian community.

Her advocacy was instrumental in the successful petition to have dowry abuse recognized in the *Family Violence Protection Act 2012*, leading to law changes in Victoria and triggering a Senate Hearing into dowry abuse in 2017.

The Victorian Senior of the Year Awards have celebrated the achievements of older Victorians for more than 40 years who share their time, knowledge, and expertise to enrich the Victorian community. Other category award recipients include:

- Chidambaram Swami Srinivasan (Srini), recipient of the Promotion of Multiculturalism Award
- Gail White, recipient of the Healthy and Active Living Award
- Bruce Turner, recipient of the Veteran Community Award
- Virginia Mack, recipient of the Ageing Well Award.

The COTA (Council on the Ageing) Victoria Senior Achiever Awards were presented to 10 inspiring Victorians for their contributions including volunteering to support immigrant families with literacy and numeracy skills, and providing food relief to people in need.

To read the profiles of each of the 2024 Victorian Senior of the year Awards recipients visit seniorsonline.vic.gov.au/awards.

Quote attributable to Premier Jacinta Allan

"Victoria's seniors are invaluable to our state – and today we recognise the extraordinary efforts of older Victorians who inspire all of us to strive for more."

Quote attributable to Minister for Ageing Ingrid Stitt

"I congratulate all award recipients and nominees, for going above and beyond to create positive change in their communities. Today, we celebrate their outstanding achievements as part of the 42nd annual Victorian Seniors Festival and I encourage everyone to get along and join the celebrations."

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