Department of Education and Training

Higher Education and Skills

**Participation, Inclusion and Regional Engagement Branch Memo**

**TO:** Learn Local providers, state-wide providers, ACFE Board, ACFE Regional Councils, peak bodies, key stakeholders, PIRE Branch staff

**FROM:** Eduard De Hue, A/Director — Participation, Inclusion and Regional Engagement Branch

**DATE:** 22 / December / 2020

**SUBJECT: Winners of the Victorian Multicultural Awards 2020 announced**

**Actions**

* Banksia Gardens Community Services is the winner for the VET pre-accredited category
* Victoria University Polytechnic – Youth Program is the winner for the VET accredited category

**Victorian Multicultural Awards 2020**

The Victorian Multicultural Awards 2020 is an annual event celebrating the outstanding achievement of people and organisations who strengthen multiculturalism across 15 categories. The Education category acknowledges a range of organisations across the vocational education and training (VET) settings, schools and early childhood services that provide a space for students from multicultural backgrounds in the areas of social inclusion, wellbeing and education outcomes.

The 2020 iteration of the Awards was the first year to include the VET categories;

* pre-accredited community-based training; and
* accredited training.

The VET categories endeavour to recognise innovative vocational education and training programs that enhance social inclusion, wellbeing and education outcomes for students from CALD communities, or a project that celebrates cultural diversity. Nominations ran from 31 August to 11 October 2020.

Banksia Gardens Community Services (BGCS) were awarded the VET pre-accredited category for their work in the transition to online learning. BGCS has ensured that the participants of their programs and services are being assisted in the areas of communication, engagement in community, participation in work or learning, volunteering and overall quality of life.

When COVID-19 struck, BGCS took the initiative to diversify their offerings and transition their services and programs to an online format. To ensure participants had the same level of access, the staff contacted each of the participants to assist in the changeover to online learning and maintain their engagement. BGCS endeavoured to reach out to all participants and assist in the transition to online learning and continue their engagement. BGCS provided most participants with refurbished laptops and computers quickly and at a highly reduced rate; many given away or loaned to people who could not afford them, so they could continue with the programs.

Victoria University Polytechnic’s (VUP) English as an Additional Language Youth Program aimed to assist diverse communities to access education and ensure equality for underrepresented and diverse communities in Australia’s future workforce. The Youth program enrols 180 students each semester and offers Certificate I – III in EAL from the Footscray and Werribee campuses.

The overall approach to the Youth Program is to create a unique learning experience that integrates community participation, social connection, personal development and career pathways through exposure with numerous partnerships with external organisations that support settlement outcomes.

VUP also arrange various support programs to assist students from CALD backgrounds to further their personal development and integrate into the Australian way of life. Examples include;

* engagement in a variety of sports to strengthen teamwork, leadership skills and social connections
* water safety program including a CPR module (which was undertaken online during COVID-19)
* driving lessons to assist students in acquiring their driver’s license and understand road safety
* health and wellbeing workshops, discussing mental health, sexual health and respectful relationships.

VUP’s EAL Youth Program has ensured that students from CALD backgrounds were supported through the transition to online learning and maintaining high levels of engagement through a range of core services and supports.

For more information on the Victorian Multicultural Awards, please go to <https://www.multiculturalcommission.vic.gov.au/multicultural-awards-for-excellence>