

2025 Victorian Senior of the Year Awards nomination guide

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# About the awards

* For more than 30 years, the Victorian Senior of the Year Awards have celebrated older Victorians who contribute to the community through volunteering.
* The skills, time and energy older Victorians share with the community make our state stronger.
* There are many ways older people make a positive impact in our local communities, from daily hands-on support to leading organisations.
* The awards ceremony in October is a highlight of the annual [Victorian Seniors Festival](https://www.seniorsonline.vic.gov.au/victorian-seniors-festival) https://www.seniorsonline.vic.gov.au/victorian-seniors-festival. The month-long celebration features free and low-cost events for older Victorians.

# Contact

If you need assistance at any point in the process, please contact the Seniors Festival Team:

Phone: (03) 8850 6164

Email: seniorsfestival@dffh.vic.gov.au

# Key stages and dates

| Milestone | Due date |
| --- | --- |
| Nominations open | Monday 5 May 2025 |
| Nominations close | 11:59 pm, Sunday 1 June 2025 |
| Nominees approve their nomination | Sunday 15 June 2025 |
| Judging period | July 2025 |
| Shortlisted recipients notified | August 2025 |
| Awards ceremony | Wednesday 22 October 2025 |

# Award categories

The award categories are:

* **Premier’s Award for Victorian Senior of the Year**– recognises an individual for their outstanding and lasting contribution to their local community and Victoria.
* **Council on the Ageing (COTA) Victoria Senior Achiever Awards** – recognises local community champions that significantly contribute to positive ageing in their community.
* **Emerging Impact Award** – recognises an individual who is new to volunteering and is making a significant impact in their local community.
* **Positive Ageing Award** – recognises an individual who improves the wellbeing of older people in their community by promoting positive and active ageing.
* **Promotion of Multiculturalism Award** – recognises an individual for a significant contribution to promoting the benefits of cultural diversity in their local community and across Victoria.
* **Veteran Community Award** – recognises an individual for their exceptional contribution to the veteran community. The recipient of the award does not need to be a veteran.

# Nomination process for 2025



# How to nominate someone

## Check the eligibility

Victorian Senior of the Year Awards nominees must be:

* a citizen or permanent resident of Australia,
	+ a resident of Victoria and
	+ 60 years or over, or
* an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person residing in Victoria aged 50 years or over.

Nominees cannot have been a previous award recipient of the Victorian Senior of the Year Awards, at any point.

Nominees will be assessed on their volunteer contributions and achievements since reaching the qualifying age only.

Self-nominations are not accepted.

## Choose an award category

There are six award categories:

* The **Premier’s Award for Victorian Senior of the Year** recognises an individual for their outstanding and lasting contribution to their local community and Victoria.
* The **Council on the Ageing (COTA) Victoria Senior Achiever Awards** recognise local community champions that significantly contribute to positive ageing in their community.
* The **Emerging Impact Award** recognises an individual who is new to volunteering and is making a significant impact in their local community.
* The **Positive Ageing Award** recognises an individual who improves the wellbeing of older people in their community by promoting positive and active ageing.
* The **Promotion of Multiculturalism Award** recognises an individual for a significant contribution to promoting the benefits of cultural diversity in their local community and across Victoria.
* The **Veteran Community Award** recognises an individual for their exceptional contribution to the veteran community. The recipient of the award does not need to be a veteran.

## Gain consent from your nominee

* Make sure you speak with the person you are nominating as all nominees and nominators must agree to have their information shared with the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (the department) prior to you submitting the nomination.
* The nominee may be subject to a National Police Check should the nomination be shortlisted by the judging panel.
* The Seniors Festival Team at the department will also seek the nominee’s consent in writing, once you have submitted the nomination. If written consent is not received by Sunday 15 June 2025, the nomination will be deemed ineligible.

## Collect information

To make a nomination, you will need information about the person you are nominating including their:

* Full name
* Phone number
* Age
* Email address (optional)
* Postal address
* Pronouns (optional)
* Cultural/religious beliefs (optional)
* Do they identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander?
* Volunteering work in relation to the chosen category
* Details about how often they volunteer and the length of time they have been in the role/s.

## Find references and a photo

The last step is some supporting information. For your nominee, you will need:

* References from 2 people, including their contact details; please inform referees that their information will be provided to the department prior to submitting the references to the department
* A photo of the nominee

## Submit your nomination online

Nominations can be submitted online using [Award Force](https://senioroftheyear.awardsplatform.com/) www.senioroftheyear.awardsplatform.com

If you would prefer a printed nomination form, please contact the Seniors Festival Team by phone on (03) 8850 6164 or email seniorsfestival@dffh.vic.gov.au

**All nominations must be received by 11:59 pm on Sunday 1 June 2025.** Nominations received after this time, in any form, will not be considered for the Awards and no responsibility will be accepted by the department for lost, late, incomplete, or incorrectly submitted nominations.

# Criteria questions

The nomination form asks questions about the nominee’s volunteering work. You will be asked to respond to the questions relating to the chosen category.

In addition, you will be provided with the opportunity to provide an overview of the nominee’s volunteering contributions, including how often they volunteer and the length of time they have been in the role.

## Premier’s Award for Victorian Senior of the Year

Previous award recipients have influenced significant change in the state. This has not necessarily been connected to positive ageing.

For instance, the 2024 award recipient co-founded the AustralAsian Centre for Human Rights and Health that later advocated to include dowry abuse in the *Family Violence Protection Act 2012*. Another awardee volunteered for 15 years at their Neighbourhood House, where they created a local op shop and organised food packages for farmers affected by drought in regional Victoria and New South Wales.

### Criteria for the Premier’s Award for Victorian Senior of the Year

* How do they make an outstanding and lasting contribution to their community and Victoria?
* How do their volunteer contributions make a long-lasting impact?

## Council on the Ageing (COTA) Victoria Senior Achiever Awards

This category is focused on celebrating the local champions within your community. Think of the person that connects people to opportunities, the one that drives your next-door neighbour to appointments every week, or the person who always volunteers first for an organisation, purely to support the needs of your area.

### Criteria for the Council on the Ageing (COTA) Victoria Senior Achiever Awards

* How do they make a positive contribution to improving the lives of their local community members?
* How does their positive attitude towards ageing inspire others?

## Emerging Impact Award

This category celebrates older Victorians who have recently started volunteering and are making a positive impact in their community. This could be in a formal way through organisations and committees; or an informal way, where someone is volunteering their professional skills, knowledge and experience.

### Criteria for the Emerging Impact Award

* How do they make a significant volunteer contribution to their community?
* How have they taken action to create or contribute to programs that are making a growing and potentially lasting impact?
* How do they share their skills, knowledge and experiences as a volunteer to strengthen their community?

## Positive Ageing Award

This category exists to celebrate people who encourage an active, engaged approach to life within the framework of positive ageing.

In 2023, the recipient of this award had been volunteering at Blind Sports & Recreation Victoria for 9 years. In that time, he focussed his efforts on advancing blind sports, establishing tournaments, improving accessibility and promoting blind golf through partnerships and fundraising. In 2024, the recipient received this award for her work through Family History Connections (FHC) Blackburn. FHC has supported over 2,000 people to keep their minds active, learn computer research skills and make friends with people with shared interests.

### Criteria for the Positive Ageing Award

* How have they contributed to creating an active community?
* How do their actions create long-lasting benefits for wellbeing in their community?
* How do they promote respect and recognition of older people?

## Promotion of Multiculturalism Award

Most award recipients in this category have been recognised for contributing to positive social connection and ageing.

Past award recipients have supported community connection through activities like dancing, sports, exercise and cooking. They have also built connections between various cultures or encouraged older Victorians from their communities to engage with new programs and services.

### Criteria for the Promotion of Multiculturalism Award

* How do they create a sense of community and connection across cultures?
* How do their volunteer contributions support the community?

## Veteran Community Award

Award recipients for this category are either a veteran themselves or support the veteran community. Previous award recipients have delivered programs that connect older veterans to community services, engage veterans in local social activities or their local RSL branch, and/or advocated for change to support the veteran community.

### Criteria for the Veteran Community Award

* How do they contribute to the veteran community?
* How do their actions make a long-lasting impact for veterans and/or their families?

# Frequently asked questions (FAQ)

## General questions

### What information should I consider including in my nomination?

You may wish to include reference to the following areas:

* What work, tasks and responsibilities did the nominee take on?
* Did they manage or contribute to a project or event?
* How has their work impacted members of the organisation or the community?
* How many people has their volunteer work impacted?
* How did they encourage or support people in the organisation or community? Did they:
	+ provide a service
	+ run programs
	+ help people to access the community
	+ make a community space more enjoyable to use.
* Does your nominee have additional personal responsibilities?
* Do they care for grandchildren or parents?
* Are they a carer for a child or relative with disability?
* Do they live with disability, or an illness that they have had to manage?
* Do they have a multifaith, multicultural or refugee connection?

### When are nominations due?

Nominations must be submitted by 11:59 pm on Sunday 1 June 2025. Nominations received after this time will not be considered for the awards and no responsibility will be accepted by the department for lost, late, incomplete, or incorrectly submitted nominations.

### Can I submit a paper-based application?

Yes, please reach out to the Seniors Festival Team to have one sent to you:

Phone: (03) 8850 6164

Email: seniorsfestival@dffh.vic.gov.au

### Is there an entry fee?

No.

### Can I nominate myself?

No, self-nominations are not accepted.

### Can I nominate a person outside of Victoria?

No, nominees must reside in Victoria.

### Can I nominate a relative?

Yes, you can nominate someone you are related to.

### Can I nominate an organisation, business or community group?

No, only individuals (natural persons) can be nominated across all categories.

### Can a business make a nomination?

Yes, a business can submit a nomination, but for an individual only.

### Can I nominate someone for more than one category?

Yes. A person can be nominated for up to 2 award categories. Each nomination must be tailored to the award category. If the same information is submitted twice, the Seniors Festival Team will determine which category is best suited to the nominee’s contribution.

### Do I have to tell the person that I am nominating them?

Yes, it is your responsibility, as the nominator, to inform the nominee that you have nominated them. You must also gain their consent to share their details with the department.

Following the closing date, the Seniors Festival Team will also reach out to your nominee to gain their written consent for the nomination to proceed.

The nominee must respond in writing by Sunday 15 June with their consent, if a response is not received by this date, the nomination will be deemed ineligible.

## Referees

### What is a referee?

A referee is a person who knows the nominee well and can confirm their achievements and information about the project or activity for which the nominee is being nominated. The referee should be informed about the purpose of the reference and the nomination and that they may be contacted by the Seniors Festival Team about their reference.

### Can a person be a referee for a relative being nominated?

Yes, a person can be a referee for someone they are related to unless they are the nominator.

### Can I put myself down as a referee for someone I am nominating?

No. The process is designed so that there are three people who support the nomination – one person who makes the nomination (you), and 2 other people who support the nomination by acting as referees.

### Do I have to submit a letter from the 2 referees?

No. You do not need to submit letters from referees. However, if the referees cannot be easily contacted by the Seniors Festival Team it is recommended that a letter be included (for example, if the referee is overseas).

### Do I have to provide 2 referees, or can I just provide one?

Two (2) referees are required for each nomination.

## About nominations

### Do I have to answer all questions in the nomination form?

Yes. You must answer all questions to complete the nomination (unless a question is stated to be optional in the form). The answers provide important information about the nominee and their achievements which enables the judging panel to consider them for the award.

### How many award recipients will there be?

The Council on the Ageing (COTA) Victoria Senior Achiever Awards can have up to 10 awardees, all other categories can have 1 awardee.

## The judging process

### Who assesses the nominations?

Nominations are assessed by a panel, likely consisting of representatives from the:

* Council on the Ageing (COTA) Victoria
* The University of the Third Age
* Veterans Council Victoria – Office for Veterans
* Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria
* The Senior Newspaper
* Senior Victorians Advisory Committee
* Organisations delivering and supporting services for senior Victorians
* The Equality, Seniors, Women and Equity Strategy Branch (non-voting).

### How are nominations assessed, and award recipients selected?

* Each nomination is reviewed by the Seniors Festival Team to confirm it is eligible.
* An internal team of department staff across the Equality, Seniors, Women and Equity Strategy Branch review nominations against the criteria and provide a shortlist for the judging panel.
* The judging panel then reviews a list of shortlisted, eligible nominations and scores them against the criteria.
* Nominations are then ranked by score and compiled for the judging panel's deliberation meeting.
* The judging panel then discusses the nominations and compiles a shortlist of nominees for each category.
* A panel chair will be chosen to be the final decision maker if the panel cannot come to a majority decision.
* The judges will be bound confidentially, so the outcome is not disclosed until the awards ceremony.
* As part of this process, referees may be contacted in relation to their reference.
* Shortlisted nominees will be security checked via a National Police Check.
* Following successful security clearance, recommended nominees will be submitted to the Minister for Ageing and the Premier of Victoria for approval.

### When will I be notified of the outcome?

Unsuccessful nominees and nominators will be notified in August 2025. The final outcome with award recipients confirmed, will be announced publicly in October 2025 following the awards ceremony.

# Terms and conditions

Please read these terms and conditions and ensure that you and the person you are nominating understand and accept them before making a nomination.

A person who nominates (Nominator) or a person who is nominated, being a natural person (Nominee) for the 2025 Victorian Senior of the Year Awards (the awards) and submits or accepts a nomination is deemed to have accepted these terms and conditions.

## Eligibility

Victorian Senior of the Year Awards nominees must be:

* a citizen or permanent resident of Australia,
	+ a resident of Victoria; and
	+ 60 years or over, or
* an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person residing in Victoria aged 50 years or over.

Nominees cannot have been a previous award recipient of the Victorian Senior of the Year Awards, at any point.

Nominees will be assessed on their volunteer contributions and achievements since reaching the qualifying age only.

Self-nominations are not accepted.

## Nominator's consent

By submitting a nomination, including personal information (as defined in the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014* (Vic) or where applicable any health information (as defined in the *Health Records Act 2001* (Vic)) provided as part of that nomination, each Nominator confirms that they consent, and has the consent of any person whose personal or health information is contained in a nomination, including but not limited to:

* the Nominee(s); and
* referees for Nominee(s),

to provide that information to the department, and for the department to disclose that personal or health information to other parties for the purpose of conducting the awards including, but not limited to, the awards judges, the Minister for Ageing, Premier of Victoria and their offices and partners.

If the Nominator does not agree or have the requisite consent of the Nominee and their referees, the Nominator must not provide their personal or health information or the personal or health information of anyone else and will be unable to submit a nomination for the awards.

Each Nominator consents to the department using the Nominator’s nomination description, statements, name, likeness, image, voice and/or participation in the awards (including photograph, film and/or recording of the same) in any media for an unlimited period of time without further notification, remuneration or compensation for the purpose of promoting, publicising or marketing the awards (including any outcome). If the Nominator does not agree, the Nominator must not provide their personal or health information or the personal or health information of anyone else and will be unable to submit a nomination for the awards.

## Nominee's consent

By accepting the nomination, all Nominees agree to the following terms and conditions:

* The Nominee consents to the department using their nomination description, statements, name, likeness, image, voice and/or participation in the awards (including photograph, film and/or recording of the same) in any media for an unlimited period of time without further notification, remuneration or compensation for the purpose of promoting, publicising or marketing the awards (including any outcome) or other Victorian State government initiatives.
* The Nominee consents to the department using their personal and health information submitted in the nomination, and for the department to disclose their personal and health information to other parties for the purposes of conducting the awards including, but not limited to, the award judges, the Minister for Ageing, the Premier of Victoria and award partners.
* The Nominee consents to taking part in the screening process including, but not limited to, a National Police Check and review of social media and other public online profiles.

If the Nominee does not agree, the Nominee must not accept their nomination and will be ineligible for the Awards.

## Privacy statement

Consistent with Victorian Government policy and legislation, the department endorses fair information handling practices which are set out in the [department’s privacy statement](https://dhhsvicgovau.sharepoint.com/sites/OfficeoftheEDWEM-GRP-PD-EQUITYSTRATEGYANDPROJECTS/Shared%20Documents/PD%20-%20EQUITY%20STRATEGY%20AND%20PROJECTS/013.%20Card%20Operations/Seniors%20Festival%20%26%20Awards/2025%20VSoYA/03.%20Comms%2C%20Media%2C%20Design/Nomination%20Guide/department%E2%80%99s%20privacy%20statement) https://www.dffh.vic.gov.au/privacy-statement

Personal and health information supplied as a part of the nomination will be used by the department, the judging panel, the office of the Minister for Ageing, the office of the Premier of Victoria, and the award ceremony venue for the purposes of considering nominations, safety screening, selecting award recipients, and conducting the award ceremony.

Personal and health information will not be disclosed or used for any other purpose without the express consent of the person to whom the information relates, unless otherwise required or permitted by law.

The Nominators or Nominees can email seniorsfestival@dffh.vic.gov.au to seek to correct their personal or health information or make a complaint about a breach of their privacy.

## Liability

The department does not accept any liability for any loss, damage, cost or expense incurred as a result of a person’s participation in the awards.

All Nominators, Nominees and referees release and discharge the department (including its employees and agents), the Minister for Ageing, the Premier of Victoria and the State of Victoria in relation to any claim or cause of action they may have arisen out of or in connection with their participation in the awards.

## Nomination process

* Nominations received after 11:59 pm, Sunday 1 June 2025, may not be considered for the awards and no responsibility will be accepted by the department for lost, late, incomplete or incorrectly submitted nominations. If you need assistance with submitting your nomination by the deadline, please contact the Seniors Festival Team on (03) 8850 6164 or email seniorsfestival@dffh.vic.gov.au
* A separate online nomination form must be completed in Award Force for each nominee.
* Online nominations will be acknowledged with a confirmation email once your nomination form is received. Offline nominations will be acknowledged within 3 business days of the nomination closing date.
* When nominating an individual for an award, please ensure they agree to be nominated.
* Nominations must include the names and contact details of 2 referees who can confirm the accuracy of the submission and verify the Nominee’s eligibility for an award. Referees must not be the nominator.
* All nominations and materials submitted to the department in connection with the Awards will become the property of the department and will not be returned.
* Nominators can confirm the eligibility of a Nominee by contacting the Seniors Festival Team by phone on (03) 8850 6164 or email seniorsfestival@dffh.vic.gov.au prior to submitting a nomination.

**Nominators cannot:**

* Be a member of the judging panel, employees and contractors of the department who are directly involved in conducting the awards or their immediate families.
* Nominate the same Nominee in more than 2 categories
* If multiple nominations are received from different Nominators, and the content differs, they will be accepted but do not necessarily increase the likelihood of an award result.

## Screening

All Nominees will be required to:

* Confirm their acceptance of these terms and conditions by following the instructions set out in Award Force; and
* Submit a completed National Police Check Consent Form with associated proof of identity documents to the department if they are shortlisted.

If a Nominee does not accept the terms and conditions, the Nominee will be ineligible to be considered for the awards.

All shortlisted nominations will be subject to a thorough vetting and screening process conducted by the department.

## Judging and selection

* The department reserves the right to verify the validity of nominations, allocate nominations into an alternative category and/or disqualify any nominations that are not compliant with the terms and conditions set out in this nomination guide.
* The department may request further information or clarification from the Nominator, Nominee(s) or referees regarding any nomination.
* A judging panel will consider all eligible nominations and rate each against the criteria for the selected award category. Nominations with the highest combined scores will be shortlisted for the judges’ deliberation and endorsement.
* Award recipients will be selected from shortlisted nominees. The judges will review the shortlisted nominations and make recommendations for awardees for each category.
* Announcement of award recipients will be at the Victorian Senior of the Year Awards ceremony.
* The department reserves the right to disqualify a nominee in the event screening, including the results of their National Police Check, are deemed unsatisfactory by the department, in its absolute discretion.
* Decisions made by the Premier of Victoria, the Minister for Ageing (or the Minister’s representative) and the department on all matters pertaining to the awards are at their absolute discretion and are final. Decisions are not reviewable.

## Revocation of an Award

* The department reserves the right to revoke or rescind a Victorian Senior of the Year Award, in any award category and at any time, including any time after the award is given, if a recipient of an award is, in the reasonable opinion of the department, found to be unfit to be a recipient of the award.
* When considering whether to revoke or rescind an award, the department will consider whether the recipient of an award has engaged in conduct (at any time, including after receipt of the award) that will damage the goodwill and reputation of the awards, including (but not limited to) conduct resulting in criminal indictment.
* A decision to revoke or rescind an award is at the department’s absolute discretion, final and non-reviewable.

## Awards and recognition

* Each award finalist will be invited to attend the awards ceremony in October 2025 where the award recipients will be announced and presented with their award.
* All travel costs associated with an award finalist, their Nominator (and parent or legal guardian (if applicable)) attending the awards ceremony, and other ancillary costs, are the responsibility of the award finalist and their Nominator. The department will not be liable for any costs incurred by an award finalist, their Nominator, or any third party attending the awards ceremony.

To receive this document in another format, phone the Seniors Festival Team on
(03) 8850 6164 or, or email seniorsfestival@dffh.vic.gov.au.

**Help for people with hearing or speech communication difficulties**

Contact us through the National Relay Service (NRS). For more information about the NRS visit [National Relay Service](https://www.accesshub.gov.au/about-the-nrs) https://www.accesshub.gov.au/about-the-nrs, or call the NRS Helpdesk on 1800 555 660.

Authorised and published by the Victorian Government, 1 Treasury Place, Melbourne.

© State of Victoria, Australia, Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, May 2025.

**ISBN** 978-1-76130-816-1 **(pdf/online/MS word)**

Available at [Seniors Online - Victorian Senior of the Year Awards](https://www.seniorsonline.vic.gov.au/awards) https://www.seniorsonline.vic.gov.au/awards