

UNDER STRICT EMBARGO UNTIL 10:00PM, SATURDAY 15 NOVEMBER 2025

You beauty! Celebrating those who make Melbourne glow

Pioneering business leader and MECCA Brands founder and Co-CEO **Jo Horgan** has been named **Melburnian of the Year** at the Melbourne Awards.

Recognised for her exceptional leadership and contribution to the city, Horgan has grown MECCA from a single South Yarra store into a beauty empire with more than 110 stores across Australia and New Zealand.

Through MECCA's M-POWER and M-PACT programs, she continues to champion gender equality and education for women and girls, making a lasting impact well beyond the beauty industry.

The **Young Melburnian of the Year** is **Dr Belle Lim**, recognised for advancing diversity, equity and inclusion for international students and women in STEM.

A cancer genetics researcher and founder of Future Forte, Dr Lim has built programs reaching more than 2,500 participants from over 50 countries, and as National President of the Council of International Students Australia in 2020–21 led advocacy benefiting more than 550,000 students.

The 2025 Melbourne Awards have recognised the individuals and organisations driving positive change across the city – celebrating leadership, creativity, and community spirit at Melbourne's highest civic honour.

Held at Melbourne Town Hall on Saturday 15 November, the annual ceremony acknowledged excellence across eight categories that reflect the city's diversity and progress: Aboriginal Melbourne - ganbu guljin, Access and Inclusion, Arts and Events, City Design, Community, Knowledge and Innovation, LGBTIQA+, and Sustainability.

The City of Melbourne thanks its event partners and supporters for helping to celebrate those shaping the city's bright future.

For more information and the full list of finalists and winners, visit
melbourne.vic.gov.au/melbourneawards

Quotes attributable to Lord Mayor Nick Reece

“The Melbourne Awards are about recognising the incredible Melburnians who push the envelope and go above and beyond to make our city the best and fairest it can be.”

“Jo is a true representation of Melbourne grit and determination – growing a beloved beauty empire from scratch on our home turf, with MECCA now turning over half a billion dollars annually.”

“Belle has also demonstrated that Melbourne is a city of possibilities – arriving as an international student, advancing her studies and leadership in supporting women of international backgrounds every step of the way.”

Quotes attributable to Tourism and Events portfolio head Mark Scott

“This year’s finalists represent the spirit of Melbourne – inclusive, creative, innovative, and deeply community-minded.”

“From sustainability champions to arts leaders, every finalist is making our city stronger, more connected – and doing us all proud.”

2025 Melbourne Awards category winners

- **Aboriginal Melbourne - ganbu guljin** – Birrarangga Film Festival
Celebrating First Nations storytelling and cultural connection through film
- **Access and Inclusion** – Adaptive Music Bridging Program (Melbourne Youth Orchestras) Opening new pathways for young musicians of all abilities to connect and perform
- **Arts and Events** – Asia TOPA 2025 (Arts Centre Melbourne)
Showcasing Asia-Pacific creativity and collaboration through performance
- **City Design** – Melbourne Place Hotel (Kennedy Nolan)
Revitalising a heritage site into a vibrant destination blending old and new
- **Community** – River Nile School
Empowering young women through education and opportunity
- **Knowledge and Innovation** – Acusensus Australia Pty Ltd
Harnessing AI technology to improve road safety across Victoria and beyond
- **LGBTIQA+** – Mpox Response (Thorne Harbour Health)
Delivering community-led health leadership and awareness during a critical time
- **Sustainability** – Carbon Footprint Reduction Project (Trades Hall and Literary Institute)
Pioneering environmental sustainability within Melbourne’s heritage precincts.

ENDS

Media enquiries:

Tom Whitty, City of Melbourne | 0481 064 023 | tom.whitty@melbourne.vic.gov.au

Bria Rechner, Hyde & Seek Communications | 0434 211 480 | bria@hydeandseek.agency