

# Nomination Guide

## Ricci Marks Awards

### About the Ricci Marks Awards

The Ricci Marks Awards (awards) began in 1997 as the Aboriginal Young Achievers Award. In 2004, it was re-named after Ricci Marks. Ricci Marks was a proud Wotjobaluk man and previous award recipient. In his short life, he made an outstanding contribution to his community.

The awards acknowledge achievements with an emphasis on future pathways and development. Recipients receive a bursary intended to assist them in pursuit of their aspirations.

Today, the awards recognise the individual achievements of young First Nations people living in Victoria in areas such as: training, education, arts, sports, culture and community leadership.

There are 2 awards within the program:

- The **Ricci Marks Award** recognises the significant achievements and aspirations of young First Nations people living in Victoria.
- The **Ricci Marks Rising Star Award** recognises young First Nations people living in Victoria who demonstrate significant promise and potential.

Awards nominations are reviewed, and recipients are recommended by an independent community panel. Award winners will be announced at an awards ceremony. All shortlisted nominees and their nominators are invited to attend the event. The First Peoples – State Relations (FPSR) group within the Department of Premier and Cabinet (the Department) administers the Ricci Marks Awards program.

### Eligibility

To be eligible, nominees must:

- be a First Nations person of Australia
- be aged between 16 and 25 years of age (inclusive) on 1 January the year of the award
- have lived in Victoria since 1 January 2024
- not be a FPSR employee or elected Victorian Government official.

### Key dates

- Nominations open: 14 August 2025
- Nominations close: 11:59 pm 28 October 2025
- Panel review period: 30 October 2025 – 15 November 2025
- Interview round: 17 November 2025 – 28 November 2025
- Winners announced at the awards ceremony: March 2026

### Program information

**dpc.vic.gov.au**



Premier  
and Cabinet

The below documents are available on the FPSR [website](#). Please read them carefully before starting a nomination.

- Terms and Conditions
- Collection notice
- Ricci Marks Awards policy.

## How to nominate

Young First Nations people can nominate themselves or be nominated by someone else. Nominators may include family members, teachers, friends, employers, a representative from organisations, community groups and schools.

Please follow the steps below to complete the nomination.

### Step one

Read this nomination guide and prepare any information and documentation that you will need to complete the nomination.

#### If you are nominating yourself, you need

- to check you meet the eligibility criteria
- to provide your full name and contact information
- a short (50 word) description of yourself. If you are an award winner, this will be used to talk about your success on our website, at the event and in potential other awards promotions
- a signed [Authorisation and Consent Form](#) attached as a word document or pdf
- a high-resolution picture of yourself (aim for a file size of at least 2MB)
- information to explain how you meet the selection criteria
- letters of support or reference from people that know you. These are not compulsory but can be included to help support your answers to the nomination questions.

#### If you are nominating a young First Nations person, you need

- to check that the nominee meets the eligibility criteria
- to provide your contact information
- the full name of the nominee and any contact information you have for them
- a short (50 word) description of the young person. If they are an award winner, this will be used to talk about their success on our website, at the event and in potential other awards promotions
- a signed [Authorisation and Consent Form](#) from the nominee attached as a word document or pdf
- a high-resolution picture of the nominee (aim for a file size of at least 2MB)
- information to explain how the nominee meets the selection criteria
- letters of support or reference from people that know the nominee. These are not compulsory but can be included to help support your answers to the nomination questions.

### Step two

Create a free account with [Award Force](#) (the online nomination platform).

**Please note:** Submissions can be accepted in other formats. If you would prefer to complete a hand-written or hard copy nomination form, you can download and print the form from FPSR's [program](#)

webpage to complete it. Nominations can also be completed over the phone. To discuss this further, please contact the FPSR events team at [fpsr.events@dpc.vic.gov.au](mailto:fpsr.events@dpc.vic.gov.au) or call 03 9922 7160.

### Step three

Log in to Award Force (the online nomination platform) and fill out the nomination form by typing directly into the electronic form, making sure you keep within the word count.

If you need any support or advice when completing the form, please contact [fpsr.events@dpc.vic.gov.au](mailto:fpsr.events@dpc.vic.gov.au) or call 03 9922 7160.

### Step four

Complete and submit your nomination by 11:59 pm 28 October 2025.

### Step five

Shortlisted individuals will be contacted by FPSR for an interview with the Ricci Marks Awards Selection Panel (panel). This interview will form part of the panel's decision-making.

All other nominees will be contacted and notified of their outcome.

## Assessment process

FPSR staff will review each nomination to confirm the nominee's eligibility.

An independent panel of First Nations community members will review and assess all eligible nominations. The panel will align their assessments against the selection criteria to create a shortlist based on scores. FPSR staff will contact shortlisted nominees to arrange an interview. After the interview, the panel will meet to discuss and make recommendations the recipients of the awards.

The panel will provide its recommendations to the Minister for Treaty and First Peoples (the Minister) for consideration.

As part of this process, referees may be contacted to verify or clarify information before recipients are recommended to the Minister.

All nominators will receive notification of the outcome by email. All nominees will also be notified.

The Minister's decision is final and binding. No correspondence or appeals will be considered regarding the merits of the decision-making process.

## Accessing and using the bursary

### Payment of funds

The Ricci Marks Award bursaries are valued at \$5,000 each and the Rising Star Award bursary is valued at \$1,500. The bursary will be transferred directly in one instalment to a bank account nominated by the selected award recipients.

### Usage of funds

There are no restrictions on how the bursary can be used.

## Selection criteria

Selection criteria have been developed for each award and weighted to recognise the difference between the Ricci Marks Award and the Ricci Marks Rising Star Award.

Selection for the awards is based on the following weighted criteria assessed for each applicant.

- **The Ricci Marks Award** recognises the significant achievements and aspirations of young First Nations people living in Victoria.

Selection criteria:

- achievements and goals (40%)
- contribution to First Nations or wider Victorian communities (30%)
- how this award will support the nominee (10%)
- demonstrated leadership and initiative (20%).

- **The Ricci Marks Rising Star Award** recognises young First Nations people living in Victoria, who demonstrate significant promise and potential but may not have demonstrated the same level of achievement as the recipients of the Ricci Marks Award.

Selection criteria:

- achievements and goals (30%)
- contribution to First Nations or wider Victorian communities (20%)
- how this award will support the nominee (20%)
- demonstrated promise and potential (30%).

## Nomination questions

(response word count: minimum 200, maximum 1500 per question)

### Optional questions

- What community, mob, First Nation or language group does the nominee belong to?
- Please write a short biography to introduce the nominee.
  - Guide text: *This can help the selection panel understand more about who the nominee is and what they want to achieve.*

### Compulsory questions

#### Ricci Marks Award

##### Nominating yourself

1. What are your future goals? (max 500 words)
2. List any highlights or personal achievements that relate to the award category (max 500 words)
3. How do you contribute to your communities? (max 500 words)
4. How would receiving this award help you achieve your goals and promote your projects or work? (max 500 words)
5. Please provide a short personal statement explaining why you should receive the Ricci Marks Award, using specific examples that demonstrate leadership and initiative through your achievements and skills.
6. Please include any supporting links, videos or additional information. This could be from a peer or someone you have mentored, a teacher, a member of Community (e.g. an Elder).

##### Nominating someone else

1. What are the nominee's future goals? (max 500 words)

2. List any highlights or personal achievements that relate to the award (max 500 words)
3. How do they contribute to their communities? (max 500 words)
4. How would receiving this award help the nominee achieve their goals and promote their projects or work? (max 500 words)
5. Please provide a short statement explaining why the nominee should receive the Ricci Marks Award, using specific examples that demonstrate leadership and initiative through their achievements and skills.
6. Please include any supporting links, videos or additional information.

## Ricci Marks Rising Star Award

### Nominating yourself

1. What are your future goals? (max 500 words)
2. List any highlights or personal achievements that relate to the award category (max 500 words)
3. How do you participate in your communities? (max 500 words)
4. How would receiving this award help you pursue your goals? (max 500 words)
5. Please provide a short personal statement explaining why you should receive the Ricci Marks Rising Star Award, highlighting examples of how you continue to work towards your goals. (max 250 words)
6. Please include any supporting links, videos or additional information.

### Nominating someone else

1. What are the nominee's future goals? (max 500 words)
2. List any highlights or personal achievements that relate to the award (max 500 words)
3. How do they participate in their communities? (max 500 words)
4. How would receiving this award help the nominee pursue their goals? (max 500 words)
5. Please provide a short statement explaining why the nominee should receive the Ricci Marks Rising Star Award, highlighting examples of how they continue to work towards their goals. (max 250 words)
6. Please include any supporting links, videos or additional information.

## Scoring guide

When you fill out the nomination form, make sure your answers include examples that match the selection criteria below:

Selection criteria	Further guidance
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## **Achievements and goals**

Weighting:

Ricci Marks Award: 40%

Rising Star: 30%

In response to this criterion provide clear and detailed examples of what the nominee has already accomplished, such as:

- learning or promoting their culture
- participation in community events, particularly local or statewide First Nations community or Elders events
- sporting and/or coaching roles and accomplishments
- fundraising and awareness raising activities and initiatives
- contributing creative, unique or innovative ideas or initiatives
- encouraging others to participate in community programs and initiatives, e.g. social justice, sports, education, health and wellbeing programs
- a time when the nominee had to work with others to get a project finished or meet a deadline
- participation in study and learning programs (at university, TAFE or other institutions)
- any awards, scholarships or grants the nominee has received.

Provide clear explanations of the nominee's goals and aspirations for the future. Examples of this criterion could include:

- planned future study
- sporting aspirations
- business plans the nominee has developed for future projects
- new community groups or projects the nominee wants to launch or deliver.

## **Contribution to First Nations and wider Victorian communities**

Weighting:

Ricci Marks Awards: 30%

Rising Star: 20%

Demonstrate how the nominee contributes to First Nations communities and wider Victorian communities, such as:

- learning cultural practice, dancing or language
- involvement with local First Nations organisations
- involvement in NAIDOC Week
- playing in sports events or carnivals
- singing or doing stand-up at community gatherings or talent nights
- organising activities or events for First Nations communities
- attending a Koorie youth group

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>volunteering.</li> </ul> <p>Provide demonstrated examples that highlight how the nominee's contributions impact others, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>bringing people together</li> <li>promoting culture</li> <li>advancing reconciliation.</li> </ul>
<p><b>How the award will support the nominee</b></p> <p>Weighting:</p> <p>Ricci Marks Awards: 10%</p> <p>Rising Star: 20%</p>	<p>Clearly explain how the bursary and/or award will help the nominee. Possible examples of how it will help include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>promotion of culture and identity</li> <li>sharing their story or their project or goals with a wider audience</li> <li>bringing others on the journey and encouraging them to get involved</li> <li>contribute to completing a project or deliver on a business plan</li> <li>assist with fees or expenses.</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Ricci Marks Award only</u></b></p> <p><b>Demonstrated leadership and initiative</b></p> <p>Weighting: 20%</p>	<p>Provide an understanding of what leadership means to the nominee and some examples of demonstrated achievements and skills. This might look like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>leadership roles in community, like taking responsibility for a fundraiser or having a role in a sports team</li> <li>organising people or advocating on a local issue</li> <li>supporting other young people in your community.</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Rising Star Award only</u></b></p> <p><b>Demonstrated promise and potential</b></p> <p>Weighting: 30%</p>	<p>The Rising Star category is focused on future goals and aspirations. In response to this criterion, you can include examples in the nomination, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>involvement in community clubs and groups</li> <li>volunteering</li> <li>participation in community events</li> <li>enrolment in further studies</li> <li>extra-curricular activities.</li> </ul>

## Tips for completing a nomination

### Example response

When answering the questions, make sure you're thinking about how your answers address the selection criteria. For example, question 4 is asking about how would receiving the Ricci Marks Award help the nominee achieve their goals.

When responding to this question, you could link your answer to the selection criteria by structuring your response to include goals and aspirations the nominee has. Start with a clear sentence that explains what the nominee's goals are and how this recognition and bursary would support them.

**For example:**

*The nominee's future goals and aspirations are to open their own cultural dance company in Victoria. Being recognised with a Ricci Marks Award would provide the nominee with the financial and networking support they need to get their business up and running. For example, the bursary would help go towards hiring out a dance space or assist in transport costs for the dancers to attend various events across Victoria.*

From there, you can provide more detailed information to support your answer.

## **Helpful words and phrases**

It can be difficult to put into words how someone can achieve their goals logistically. Below is a list of words and phrases that can be used to help talk about support the nominee's goals, aspirations and achievements. One or more of them could help you explain the questions:

- collective responsibility
- cultural knowledge
- Community wellbeing
- custodianship / Care for Country
- intergenerational knowledge sharing
- responsibility to mob / community / kin
- cultural continuity and transmission
- relational accountability
- guiding through story and example
- walking alongside others
- humility (serving community, not self)
- acting with respect and reciprocity
- making decisions in consultation with others
- holding space for others to grow
- protecting culture and language
- mediating conflict with fairness
- builds relationships between people and community
- fostering connections and relationships
- kindness and generosity
- a sense of purpose and love



## Getting help with your nomination

FPSR is committed to making the nomination process as accessible as possible. If you need any assistance or have questions about the process, please do not hesitate to contact the team at [fpsr.events@dpc.vic.gov.au](mailto:fpsr.events@dpc.vic.gov.au) or call 03 9922 7160.

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We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Victoria and pay our respect to them, their culture, and their Elders past and present.

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