

Media Release

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Striving towards equality for parents with disability

Emelia Young won the Minister's Award for Outstanding Leadership at the 2018 Victorian Disability Awards recently, for her work and relentless commitment to supporting new parents with disability.

The [Yooralla](#) Occupational Therapist, who works in Glenroy, was recognised for her work on the *Parenting with Disability* program – a collaborative project between Yooralla and The Royal Women's Hospital, aimed at supporting new parents with physical, intellectual and mental health disabilities.

Emelia said that supporting and advocating for soon-to-be and new parents with disability is a privilege for her and for Yooralla – one of Victoria's oldest and largest disability services providers.

"We are striving for equality in our society and that requires giving people access to the right type of supports to enable independence and participation in everyday life. This includes providing information, support and equipment to parents with a disability. When these are implemented, parents thrive caring for their child and feel empowered," she said.

Emelia was at the forefront of the establishment of the program in 2014, which she continues to coordinate.

The program is one-of-a-kind in Victoria and its objective is to support new families before and after the birth of their babies.

"When parents feel supported, their stress and anxiety around parenting is reduced, and they therefore have a more positive experience in the early stages at home with their baby. This is why I am passionate about continuing this program," she said.

As an Occupational Therapist (OT), Emelia supports the independence and confidence of new parents, by assessing and prescribing appropriate equipment, modifying current equipment and carrying out functional task analysis.

As an OT at Yooralla, Emelia works every day to assess and implement strategies and equipment for people with disability, to increase their participation and engagement in meaningful everyday activities.

The Minister's Award goes to someone who has demonstrated immense leadership skills and has been a driver of change. This category is not open for nominations as the winner is chosen from the pool of finalists.

Emelia was also nominated and received a commendation award for the Excellence in Promoting Health, Housing and Wellbeing category for her contribution to the program.

[The Victorian Disability Awards](#), run by the Department of Health and Human Services and National Disability Services, recognise and honour the achievements and contributions of

individuals, teams and organisations that provide support, leadership, advocacy, service and education to improve the lives of people with disability living in Victoria.

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