

## **It's hard to top a circus career Jamie First**

Lu Guang Rong is proof that clowning around pays off.

The 60-year-old has been in the circus industry for nearly half a century and has worked on major productions including the Sydney Olympic Games, Melbourne Commonwealth Games and Cirque du Soleil.

For his service to the performing arts as a director, performer and aerial designer, Mr Lu, who immigrated to Australia from China in 1988, was honoured with a Medal of the Order of Australia.

"I wasn't expecting it at all," he said.

"It's very exciting for me. I've been in this profession for many, many years, so getting recognised is a pretty nice thing."

The head of circus studies at the National Institute of Circus Arts (NICA) in Prahran, Mr Lu said as a kid he always got a thrill out of going to the big top, which drew him to the craft.

"I enjoyed watching people on the stage, so I wanted to become one of them.

"It's like a privilege in China, so if you have a chance to join that professional team, people go: 'whoa, look at that boy that got accepted into that drama school!'"

Among his 49 years in the business, Mr Lu's other achievements include artist in residence with Circus Oz, acrobatic performer and trainer with Victorian Opera Company and Silvers Circus, and circus director at the World Festival of the Circus of Tomorrow in Paris.

The Nunawading resident said he was grateful for the opportunities and overwhelmed by the accolade.

"I'm pretty lucky to have come in at the right time to the right country with the right skills."