



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
VICTORIA

MELBOURNE CUP EVE RECEPTION 2017

Monday 6 November, 2017

The Honourable Martin Pakula MP, Attorney-General and Minister for Racing

The Honourable John Eren MP, Minister for Tourism and Major Events, Minister for Sport, Minister for Veterans

The Honourable Jaala Pulford MP, Minister for Agriculture, Minister for Regional Development

The Honourable Ben Carroll MP, Minister for Industry and Employment

The Honourable Colin Brooks MP, Speaker of the Legislative Council

Former Governors and Premiers of Victoria

Mr Tim Smith MP, Shadow Minister for Education, Shadow Minister for Scrutiny of Government, representing the Leader of the Opposition

Other Members of the Parliament of Victoria

Consuls – General

Mrs Amanda Elliott, Chairman of the Victoria Racing Club and **VRC Committee members**

Distinguished guests, including our international guests

Ladies and gentlemen

I would like to begin by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land on which we are gathering and by paying my respect to their elders past and present and to any elders with us this evening.

Tony and I are delighted to welcome you all to Government House for this Cup Eve Reception.

As you are all well aware, the first Melbourne Cup was run more than 150 years' ago now.

Since then, many traditions have been built around it.

Nowhere is that clearer than here at Government House.

As we gather here to celebrate the 2017 Melbourne Cup, we can reflect that the first Melbourne Cup celebration held by a Governor in Victoria was hosted 144 years ago, in 1873.

That year, Victoria's 4th Governor, Sir Henry Manners-Sutton and Lady Manners-Sutton held the first Cup Week Ball, at Toorak House - now the Swedish Church in St George's Road - the home of the Governor before this magnificent House was completed a few years later.

The Governor's hosting of such glamorous Cup Week celebrations quickly caught on and it certainly flourished!

By the time our 7th Governor, Sir Henry Loch and his wife, were ensconced in this House, in the mid 1880's, it was the custom for a much more prolonged celebration of the Melbourne Cup.

During the lead up to the Cup, the Lochs hosted no less than two balls, two garden parties, two big parliamentary dinners and several evening receptions.

All the Governors from the other colonies came to stay here, a tradition replicated for many decades, (and perhaps still followed in some ways today - by the many businesses that coincidentally hold their Board meetings and stay in Melbourne on the Monday before the Melbourne Cup!)

Our records show us that for almost half a century now, Governors and their wives (and now husband) have hosted a Cup Eve Reception here at Government House.

But, in decades past, in addition to the reception, there was also a House full of titled houseguests, (the Governors of the other States), and a week-long calendar of events - both in Government House and outside - to celebrate the spring racing carnival.

Although such extended partying is no longer of our times, we have continued to celebrate the Melbourne Cup at Government House, through this Cup Eve Reception.

As we should.

The Melbourne Cup is not just an essential part of Victoria's heritage and culture, it is an essential part of our State's spectacular calendar of major events, and racing an important industry.

Last year, more than 330,000 people attended the Melbourne Cup Carnival.

Many of those who attended were visitors to Victoria.

Over the past 3 years, more than 21,000 cruise ship passengers alone have travelled here to attend the Melbourne Cup.

The impact on our fashion industry is enormous. Last year, we purchased more than 59,000 hats and fascinators, 49,000 pairs of shoes and 46,000 dresses for the Spring Racing Carnival.

In 2016, the Melbourne Cup Carnival contributed a gross economic benefit to Victoria of almost \$430 million.

The racing industry is, quite simply, important to Victoria's economy, and we are delighted that in modern times, this Cup Eve Reception gives us the opportunity to welcome representatives from every part of the sector.

Welcome to you all and thank you for your various contributions.

There is one other thing that tonight represents. It is fierce competition. I don't mean as between the 24 horses (actually, now 23 horses) who will take the track at 3pm tomorrow.

I refer to a competition with much higher stakes, although with no prize – only pride - on the line. It is the competition for the accurate tip of the winner of tomorrow's big race.

In 2015, my first year as Governor, at this event, I tipped the winner, Prince of Penzance.

Last year, again at this event, the Minister for Racing, tipped the winner, Almandin.

The Governor and the Minister are now one all. And so, now for the decider.

I know I am at a distinct disadvantage going first. But my tip this year is for Marmelo (or maybe Tiberian?).

Of course, I don't know for sure that I'll be right. What I do know for sure is that Cup Day in Melbourne is a wonderful day and we are delighted that so many of you are sharing with us the celebration of it this evening.

I am pleased for the opportunity to thank the Victoria Racing Club Board and staff for all that they do to contribute to the splendour of not just Cup Day, but our Spring Racing Carnival, and the racing industry.

And may I offer special congratulations to Amanda Elliott, the first woman to be elected Chairman of the VRC in its more than 150 year history. Proof again of a change reflective of modern times.

I now invite the Honourable Martin Pakula MP, as Minister for Racing, to address us.