



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
VICTORIA

**PEACE AND PROSPERITY KITCHEN GARDEN PROGRAM
END OF YEAR RECEPTION**

Monday 11 December, 2017

Good morning and welcome to everyone.

First, I acknowledge the traditional owners of the land upon which we are gathering and pay my respects to their elders past and present.

Tony and I are thrilled to host you all here this morning.

It is of course the experience of our beautiful 'Peace and Prosperity' garden that brings us all together.

Let me tell you a little bit more about how it came into being.

Many years ago, there was a kitchen garden here. But well before we came to Government House - 2 and a half years ago - it had been removed.

We wanted to re-establish the kitchen garden, but with a specific plan.

It was never to be about the garden itself. For us, it was always to be about what could happen in the garden that was important.

As the first female Governor of Victoria, I particularly wanted to do something for women.

You are very important to us. You are the first groups of women who have been part of this garden. You have helped us with direction. You have taught us what works. You have added your own personalities.

You have taught us that cooking and talking will always be a big part of what happens in and around that garden.

Some of you will recall the young designers from some of our universities, who have created gates and features for the garden.

They will showcase the brilliant design for which we are well known in Victoria. I hope that when you and your families visit, on Open Days like Australia Day, you will see their designs in place. They are on their way.

You will see too the scarecrows that children from a number of different special schools have made – to keep the birds away from the garden.

So, there has certainly been a lot of activity there!

You know that we have named it the 'Peace and Prosperity' garden. They are the words of our state motto.

We like them very much. They reflect what we know each one of us wishes for ourselves and our families.

I often think that if women ran the world, widespread peace and prosperity might be easier to achieve. Certainly, when we are together, we easily forget about the differences between us.

Talking about our families, swapping recipes, dancing or laughing readily show us all that we have so much in common.

It has given us such joy, watching you do all those things.

Please take with you the messages from your time here.

That you are welcome. That you are important. That you need to ensure that, as well as looking after and nurturing your families, you also look after and nurture yourselves. Enjoy friendships. Enjoy some time for yourselves. Take time to do what gives you pleasure: whether it is gardening or chatting or dancing or sewing or creating beautiful handicrafts and artworks. We have seen that you are capable of all those things.

And please know that you have each made a wonderful contribution to your Government House.

We are so grateful to Community Hubs and the Scanlon Foundation for helping us to run this program. Thank you to Sonja Hood and Alex Scanlon for your very special contributions.

Thank you too to all our staff, and particularly Erin Hollis who has, so obviously, loved every minute of having you here.

You know from my husband's tours with you, just how proud we are of this House, and so it is such a pleasure to have you here this morning enjoying it with us.

To those who celebrate Christmas, we say Merry Christmas. And to everyone, we say Happy Holidays and a peaceful and prosperous new year to you and your families.