



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
VICTORIA

AUSTRALIA DAY RECEPTION

Tuesday 23 January, 2018

The Honourable Ben Carroll MP, Minister for Industry and Employment, representing the Premier

Mr Ken Lay AO APM, Lieutenant-Governor of Victoria and **Mrs Chris Lay**

Lady Cowen AM

The Right Reverend the Honourable Dr Peter Hollingworth AC OBE, former Governor-General and **Mrs Ann Hollingworth**

Lady Murray

The Honourable Sir James Gobbo AC CVO QC, former Governor of Victoria and **Lady Gobbo**

Professor the Honourable David de Kretser AC, former Governor of Victoria and **Mrs Jan de Kretser**

The Honourable Ted Baillieu, former Premier of Victoria and **Mrs Robyn Baillieu**

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

Members of Parliament

Members of the Judiciary

Members of the Consular Corps

Ms Danielle Roche OAM, Chair, Australia Day Council and
Dr Susan Alberti AC, Chair, Australia Day Committee Victoria

Australia Day Ambassadors

Distinguished guests

Ladies and gentlemen

First, I want to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we are gathering and pay my respects to their elders past and present and to any elders with us this evening.

Tony and I are absolutely delighted to welcome you all here to this reception to mark Australia Day 2018.

In contemplating what Australia Day is about, it is clear that, in our diverse community, a national day may represent different things to different people.

For indigenous Australians, there is the inevitable reflection of the many thousands of years that they were of this land before the arrival of Europeans, of the pain and turmoil experienced thereafter, and of the continuing importance of recognition and reconciliation.

To many who have come from afar, and the almost half of us who were born overseas or have at least one parent born overseas, there is the inevitable reflection on this land as a place of security and promise, of safety, of freedom, of opportunity and a fair go for ourselves and our families.

To many others, it is a land that generations have now called home. They reflect on the history, across two World Wars, in which many had loved ones who died for this country. Their families have lived through the good times and the tough times, and drought, floods, and bushfires too.

Whatever our perspectives, how fortunate we are that we live in a society where people from such diverse backgrounds can be accommodated with understanding and generosity, and where we are free to hold and to express our different points of view.

Such differing perspectives lie at the heart of the current conversation as to the best date upon which to gather together to reflect upon and celebrate our Australian values.

Of course, policy, political decisions and public debate are not for the Governor.

What is for me though, is to encourage respectful and inclusive public discourse about this – as about all other important topics that go to the heart of our common life.

And to offer encouragement too that, in celebrating our nation, we can reflect upon our good fortune that such respectful public discussion is underpinned by the freedom to express differing opinions, by democracy and by the rule of law. These are values that protect us all.

We should reflect too on the role that each of us can play to uphold those values, to look out for each other, to ensure that we all share equally in the nation's opportunities, that we respect and embrace our diversity, and that we strive to make life better for the generations that follow upon our own.

And we should take a moment to reflect on those who are unable to celebrate as they would like: those engaged in overseas military missions on our behalf, those without family around them, those battling ill health, or those weighed down by grief or sadness.

It is a time to come together and, again this Australia Day, we shall open the gates to Government House and the beautiful garden, for many thousands of Victorians to gather and enjoy a vibrant day of celebration.

If you want to picnic in our beautiful garden, study some of the history of these grand rooms, listen to a choir, pet a baby animal, learn CPR, get into some music – perhaps a little Indian or Greek dancing even, eat a kebab, or indulge in the renowned CWA scones, you are invited. This is one BIG coming together!

Let's use this day of national celebration to reflect on what is dear to us all. And in that light, Tony and I wish you all, in accordance with our state motto, 'Peace and Prosperity.'

I now invite the Honourable Ben Carroll MP, Minister for Industry and Employment, representing the Premier, to address us.