



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
VICTORIA

## **A 'BAROQUE ARCHBISHOP' IN MELBOURNE CONFERENCE**

**Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> February, 2018**

**Professor Emeritus Jaynie Anderson OSI FAHA**, University of Melbourne

**Reverend Doctor Max Vodola**, Head, Department of Church History, Catholic Theological College

**Mr Shane Carmody**, Senior Development Manager, Advancement, University of Melbourne

**Distinguished guests**, including Wardell's descendants,

**International guests**,

**Ladies and gentlemen.**

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

Tony and I are delighted to welcome you all to Government House, and especially to extend a warm welcome to Victoria to our overseas and interstate guests.

Well, we are lawyers by trade: not historians.

But never has history resonated more with me than since we moved into this beautiful Government House.

Since the very first evening we were here, in fact.

We had rehearsed for my Inauguration the following morning. We had had dinner as a family, but I found myself alone downstairs. I was overwhelmed with the sense of history: and the thought of the families who, like us, had moved in and who had - as we would in due course - moved out again when their job was done.

The last few years have only served to connect us more to the history of this home, to our sense of temporary custodianship, and to our commitment that such an historic building must be widely used for the contemporary good of our State.

And so, it was certainly an easy decision to agree to host you here and to congratulate Professor Jaynie Anderson, Shane Carmody, and Reverend Doctor Max Vodola on their fascinating project on Archbishop James Goold's impact on the city of Melbourne.

Now, with the expertise in this room, I daren't give you a lecture on Melbourne's first Catholic Archbishop.

But I can say that Archbishop Goold belonged to a very special generation of eminent Melburnians.

He was one of a number of leading citizens determined to furnish a ramshackle boomtown with all the trappings of civilisation: with theatres, galleries, museums, universities and libraries, as well as churches.

And great public buildings.

The Archbishop was indeed a central figure in this ambitious undertaking.

He was appointed to the council of the new University of Melbourne in 1853.

A collector of books and art himself, he was a prominent donor to the public library, which then included the museum and art gallery.

But his most visible contribution was as an architectural patron.

In an era of quite marked sectarian division, Archbishop Goold had distinctively Roman Catholic and Baroque tastes, which set his enthusiasms somewhat apart from the mostly Anglican establishment.

What is obvious is that all Victorians with a love of architecture should be grateful for the Archbishop's patronage of William Wardell.

Wardell's legacy still stands all around us in this city. In the gorgeous Gothic Revival parish churches such as St Mary's in East St Kilda and St Ignatius's in Richmond: and in the glorious St Patrick's Cathedral.

Some of Wardell's most renowned designs were for secular buildings, such as the 'Venetian Gothic' ANZ Bank in Collins Street. And, of course, he designed this Italianate Government House.

But when it was first finished, this building was not immediately the most admired.

In an 1876 article that did not spare the feelings of the architect, The Age newspaper declared that Government House 'throws all the other public buildings into the shade by its surpassing bulk and ugliness'.

But time has been kinder to Wardell. Government House is now considered a fine example of the Victorian Italianate style.

Personally, I find it hard to imagine how anyone could have thought this House anything less than magnificent.

It is now part of Archbishop Goold's legacy as a patron which has echoed through the decades, and has enriched the patrimony of all Victorians.

I would like to commend the Australian Research Council for supporting this project, and congratulate the organisers of this conference for continuing the quest to understand Victoria's past in all its richness, diversity and complexity.

That leaves me to simply welcome you all once more to Victoria's Government House, and wish you a very happy and rewarding conference in the days ahead.