



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
VICTORIA

## **ISRAEL – AUSTRALIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE RECEPTION FOR MAJOR GENERAL**

**(Ret) IDO NEHUSHTAN**

**Wednesday 31 January 2018**

**The Hon Daniel Andrews MP**, Premier of Victoria

**Major General (Ret) Ido Nehushtan**, Chairman, Israel Australia Chamber of Commerce and  
**Mrs Orna Nehushtan**

**Mr Richard Bolt**, Secretary, Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and  
Resources

**Mr Leon Kempler**, Chairperson, Australia-Israel Chamber of Commerce

**Mr Paul Israel**, Executive Director, Israel-Australia Chamber of Commerce

**Mr Marcus Mandie**, Chief Executive Officer, Australia-Israel Chamber of Commerce

**Distinguished guests**

**Ladies and gentlemen**

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

Tony and I are delighted to welcome you all to Government House, to celebrate the warmth and continuing opportunities in the relationship between Victoria and Israel.

To you, Major General, we say a special Barukh Haba! Welcome!

It is a pleasure to welcome you to Victoria, noting your distinguished service to the State of Israel across a decorated military career, and as such an eminent community and business leader.

Welcome too to Mrs Nehushtan who has been able to join you on this visit, and to IACC's Executive Director, Mr Paul Israel. We are well aware of your outstanding commitment to the Chamber in Israel, Mr Israel, and that you are a great friend to Victoria.

Although today we recognise the successes of the Israel-AUSTRALIA and AUSTRALIA-Israel Chambers of Commerce, forgive me if I concentrate my brief remarks on Israel and VICTORIA.

I assure you that is not because I am 'un-Australian'. Or parochial.

It is that, as the Governor of Victoria, I have the privilege of an excellent vantage point from which to observe the specific commonalities between us.

We have in common our people: Victoria is home to the largest Israeli population in Australia. And Israel and Victoria have enjoyed a long history of friendship and support.

Most importantly, we share an interest in innovation and innovative ways of doing things.

For Victoria, a State without vast mineral resources upon which to rely and, in more recent times, with a changing landscape of traditional manufacturing, we have had to think creatively and work differently.

For Israel, that has always been the case.

Well before the buzz-words of '*innovation*', '*start-ups*' and '*ecosystems*', innovation was central to the life of the fledgling State of Israel – whether it was by divining ways to grow food in the desert to feed its people; finding smart ways to keep its small population safe; or devising clever ideas to shore up an economy with scarce natural resources.

Israel was, as our Prime Minister has described it, the '*original start-up nation*'.

We look to your extraordinary achievements in agriculture and agrotechnology, irrigation, solar energy, and nanotechnology - amongst your many successful hi-tech industries.

And we see many fruitful partnerships growing between us: a great example being the outstanding medical research undertaken here in our Parkville precinct, combined with Israel's brilliance as a leader in the commercialisation of such research.

Premier Andrews has recently returned from an official visit to Israel, where he opened our Victorian Government Trade and Investment office, the only Australian state government office of its kind in Israel.

The Premier can share more with you about that.

It is hoped that we will be undertaking an official visit to Israel later this year.

It will not be our first trip to Israel. We have been fortunate to have visited several times.

I expect that the perspective of a State Governor will be a little different from the perspective of a '20 something' young woman, as I was on my first visit (a mere four decades ago!).

Mind you, I experienced innovation even then.... while helping to tend the first crop of avocado trees ever planted in Kibbutz Sdot Yam, just south of Caesarea. (I am pleased to report that when I returned to visit the kibbutz some years later, the trees had grown, and flourished into a productive crop).

This time, I will look forward to playing a small role in continuing to grow the relationships and opportunities dear to both Victoria and Israel.

I am keen today to thank all of you who contribute so enthusiastically to those relationships and interests.

The continuing success of our partnerships is a testament to the calibre of the people working hard in both our countries.

I extend Victoria's thanks to Major General Nehushtan, to Paul Israel, and to all those at the IACC.

And it is timely not only to thank the National Chairman of the AICC, Leon Kempler AM, but also to congratulate him on being recognised for his generous community service, having been admitted as a Member of the Order of Australia in the Australia Day Honours List last week.

It is now my pleasure to introduce the Honourable Daniel Andrews MP, Premier of Victoria, to address us.