



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
VICTORIA

GRAND PRIX OFFICIAL WELCOME RECEPTION

Thursday 22 March 2018

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

The Honourable Luke Donnellan MP, Minister for Roads and Road Safety

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

Mrs Robyn Baillieu

The Honourable Heidi Victoria MP, Shadow Minister for Tourism and Major Events

Mr Chase Carey, Chairman and CEO, Formula 1

Mr John Harnden AM, Chairman, Australian Grand Prix Corporation

Mr Andrew Westacott, Chief Executive Officer, Australian Grand Prix Corporation

Ms Claire Williams OBE, Deputy Team Principal, Williams Martini Racing

Sir Jackie Stewart OBE, Three-time F1 World Champion

Members of the Consular Corp

Other 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 elders here with us this evening.

Tony and I are delighted to welcome you to Government House to mark the start of this year's Formula 1 Rolex Australian Grand Prix.

In particular, we welcome our many guests who have joined us from interstate and overseas.

As usual, we anticipate all the excitement of the season's opening round of the FIA Formula One World Championship.

We can expect new car liveries. New engine regulations. New safety devices. And two champions, each four-time winners, in Hamilton and Vettel, racing against each other.

And for the first time, we will have the excitement of Supercars competing for points.

As you well know, in Victoria, we love sporting events. And we love innovation.

Innovation is what drives Formula 1, and when the Grand Prix comes to Melbourne, we are not only privy to some of the best and cleverest minds on the global stage of this sport, but we are also the beneficiaries of great inspiration for our own young innovators.

Amongst our very special guests this evening are four young men who are living proof of that.

Hugh, Kyle, David and Alec from Trinity Grammar School, right here in Melbourne, designed and manufactured a miniature F1 car and emerged the winners of the F1 in Schools Technology Challenge. This competition saw millions of students engaged globally, and our boys competed against 276 competitors from 34 nations in the World Finals in Malaysia a few months ago.

I'd encourage you all to take a look at their car, set up this evening in our State Dining Room.

Congratulations boys!

Congratulations too to the Australian Grand Prix Corporation on its Industry and Innovation Precinct at the track.

It is well worth a visit. You will be excited when you see the skills and talent of the students from RMIT University, in design, engineering and manufacturing. And this year they are joined by exhibitors from Deakin University, Victoria Polytechnic and Kangan Institute.

I mentioned that Supercars will be competing for points this year. They will also be competing for the Larry Perkins Trophy. It is, with other trophies, on display for you to see this evening.

I note that this new trophy, including its 3D printed spokes, was in fact made right here at RMIT.

Made right here in Melbourne too are the Guide Dog puppies who join us out on the Fountain Court this evening. It is wonderful that Guide Dogs Australia is again the Australian Grand Prix's Official Charity.

I welcome this opportunity to thank the Australian Grand Prix CEO, Andrew Westacott, the Chair, John Harnden AM and his Board – including the two excellent new recruits, Mark Webber AO and Kimberley Brown – for their hard work, dedication and expertise in delivering this world-class event.

And it is impossible this evening, amongst this gathering of the F1 family not to reflect upon the vision and tireless work of the late Ron Walker AC CBE. How many times has his towering figure stood prominently in this Ballroom at this event – and at so many other important events for Victoria.

We welcome members of Ron's family here with us this evening.

We all know that Melbourne is a city of festivals and events. Much of that is thanks to Ron Walker.

The Grand Prix is one of those great events, bringing avid fans flocking to our city from further afield in Australia and from overseas.

We hope that you all enjoy your time in the world's most liveable city, and for those of you who don't need to rush to the next F1 event, that you will treat yourself to time here exploring our city and the delights of our State.

May I mention one of our special guests from overseas.

Claire Williams, Deputy Team Principal of the Williams Martini Racing team, will address us shortly.

Ms Williams, we are delighted to have you with us.

You are one of the most influential women in motorsport, and a great role model and advocate for the career opportunities for girls and women within the industry.

But first, I have the pleasure to invite the Honourable John Eren MP, Minister for Sport to address us.