



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
VICTORIA

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY CIVIC RECEPTION WARRNAMBOOL

Thursday 8th March, 2018

Cr Robert Anderson, Mayor, Warrnambool City Council

Mr Bruce Anson, Chief Executive Officer, Warrnambool City Council

Warrnambool City Councillors

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 evening.

Tony and I are so pleased to be with you all, here, in Warrnambool, and on International Women's Day.

I very much like International Women's Day. It gives us all – men and women - the chance to pause, reflect, celebrate and to continue working towards gender parity.

This is my third IWD as the Governor of Victoria and, each year, I have spent it, and the days around it, with many different businesses, professional groups, schools and organisations around the state.

The common thread that I have observed has been the commitment to equality and diversity, as the cornerstones of strong, healthy and prosperous communities.

How delighted I am to be recognising this International Women's Day with you in Warrnambool, and I thank the Mayor, Councillors and CEO of the city for making it the theme of this reception.

And so, I will talk to you briefly about the issues that this United Nations day raises for us, before I just tell you a little about what a great time we have been having in this region over the last few days!

When it comes to gender parity, I think that there is a great deal to feel optimistic about, but still some serious areas of concern for all of us who worry about and wish to leave the world a better place for our daughters and grand-daughters, and in turn for our sons and grand-sons.

There are some truly concerning figures that tell us that the world is not as we want, and need, it to be.

We know that in Australia, more than one woman is killed in an incident of family violence every fortnight, and that many more are injured.

We know too that, amongst other things, women in this country still earn on average around 15 per cent less than men: that is around \$250 less per week. And last year, the World Economic Forum predicted that it would take 170 years to achieve global gender parity.

This is certainly not just an Australian problem but, unhappily, Australia is ranked 35th in the world when it comes to gender parity. We can do better.

And when it comes to the role of women, although the last few decades have certainly seen many firsts and some progress, we still count many achievements in the '*ones*': one female Prime Minister, one Governor-General, one Victorian Premier and one female Victorian Governor.

And we know that within business, the professions, the trades and community leadership roles, women are still not coming through in the numbers that we would all hope, to ensure that we benefit from 100% of our state's, nation's and the world's talent pool.

All that said, there is much to be optimistic about.

I applaud, and feel uplifted by the Male Champions of Change – who make it clear that parity is not just a women’s issue, but everyone’s issue.

Across the community, I see a universal concern about family violence, and a commitment to working together to keep women safe.

And I see increasing numbers of women beginning to come through to take up a range of leadership positions in the life of this State.

I must say that this part of our State does have much to feel optimistic about.

This morning I met with a dozen of your school leaders – from both Warrnambool and Moyne – to mark the occasion of International Women’s Day, and to hear their views generally on their lives and aspirations.

They are a credit to their schools, their communities, but above all, to themselves. The boys and girls I met were optimistic and positive about the future and left me with the distinct impression that the future should be very safe in their hands.

Otherwise, I just want to emphasise just how much Tony and I are enjoying our stay here.

The physical beauty is obvious enough. The Merri Marine Sanctuary alone is an example of that.

But we have seen the community spirit too, for example at the RSL, with its great new Veterans Support Centre. And via Vicki Jellie’s vision and the community contribution towards the South West Regional Cancer Centre.

Of course, Vicki must be congratulated not only on her status as the 2017 Australian Local Hero of the Year, but also on her recent appointment as a Member of the Order of Australia. And I will have the pleasure of investing her at an upcoming ceremony.

We have seen clever local businesses and best-practice agriculture and aquaculture.

And we have had the privilege to visit the famous Budj Bim Heritage Landscape. We had a glimpse of 6,600 years ago on this land of the extraordinary Aboriginal history and culture in the region.

We were delighted to be guided by a young Indigenous ranger. His love of country and respect for his heritage were palpable. It was a privilege to learn from him.

We have met the Marema dogs, seen the beautiful art gallery, watched the clever Deakin medical students in their training, and we still have two more days to go. That time will include the famous Port Fairy Folk Festival to which we are very much looking forward.

Oh yes, we have eaten well too!

Thank you to all of those who have so generously given of their time to show us around and to help us learn more about Warrnambool and Moyne.

And finally, I'd like to thank the organisers of this event, the Mayor, Councillors and CEO of Warrnambool City Council for hosting this event this evening. In particular thanks to Ms Wendy Clark, Executive Assistant, Executive Services, and Ms Vanessa Gerrans, Director, Warrnambool Art Gallery.

We look forward to meeting and chatting with as many of you as possible shortly.