



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
VICTORIA

## **CWA VICTORIA 90<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY GARDEN PARTY**

**Wednesday 11 April, 2018**

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

**The Honourable Jaala Pulford MP**, Minister for Agriculture and Minister for Regional Development

**The Honourable Matthew Guy MP**, Leader of the Opposition

**The Honourable Peter Walsh MP**, Leader of the National Party

**Mrs Lyn Harris OAM**, State President and **CWA Members**

**Mrs Ruth Shanks AM**, President, Associated Country Women of the World

**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.

What a pleasure to join you here today in what you'll forgive me for calling Victoria's **SECOND** most beautiful House!

And what a pleasure indeed to be celebrating CWA Victoria's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Ninety years of women focused on service and friendship, socialising, growth, and learning.

Ninety years of initiating, fighting and lobbying to build a better life for women and children, to guard against isolation and to service and improve local communities.

It is also ninety years of the most sublime scones as well. And, although as your Patron, I know – and advocate for the fact – that the CWA is so much more than its famous scones, there is no reason at all to hide from the fact that, in addition to all your other achievements, you still do make the best scones .... well.....anywhere on the planet!

In all seriousness, only the most robust volunteer organisations can survive and even thrive across 90 years.

That's across three or four generations, two world wars, many changes of government, economic times that have waxed and waned, and of course through all that nature has thrown at your members across our state.

How have you done it?

First, you have a good pedigree.

In 1928, this group first formed, to meet a confluence of needs: a sustained period of drought, the onset of the Depression, the resettlement of soldiers from the Great War and the arrival of new migrants.

It is – as an aside – nice for me to note that your first meeting was chaired by a Governor's wife, Lady Somers. It is interesting just how very often my research about our State's most beloved institutions reveals a direct link to the service of our Governor's wives. (But that will not surprise any of you, I am sure!)

You have also enjoyed success, quite simply through the power of women banding together. The grit. The capacity to support families and communities by hanging tough during the hard times. The sisterhood, shared values and friendship. The wanting to see things right for our own families, for others and for our children's children and beyond.

And you have changed with the times. In the past you helped with the war effort, packing food parcels and spinning wool garments. You helped start Infant Welfare centres and Home Help Schemes. You lobbied for community playgrounds, or taught crafts to women in prison.

Today, in addition to such practical contributions, and so much more, you provide a strong voice on issues as diverse as family violence, food labelling, water sustainability and smart metres.

To all the office-bearers, supporters and the vast army of volunteers, I welcome the chance today, on behalf of all Victorians, to say a heartfelt 'thank you'.

A special thank you to your President, Mrs Lyn Harris OAM whom I am looking forward to seeing at Government House next week, when she will be invested with her Medal of the Order of Australia. Congratulations to you, Mrs Harris.

Thank you for all that you contribute to your communities across Victoria, and all that you model to our children and others as to the power of being involved and of friendship.

How apt that the magnificent rose bred especially to celebrate this occasion is called the Friendship Rose. Congratulations to Calum Haygarth who has grown this rose and joins us here today.

Congratulations too to the CWA Victoria for winning the bid to host the Associated Country Women of the World Conference in Melbourne next year, that will see representatives from 70 countries gathering here.

And what a pleasure it is to say Happy 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday to CWA Victoria.