



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
VICTORIA

BALLARAT CIVIC RECEPTION

Thursday, 16 August 2018

Councillor Samantha McIntosh, Mayor, City of Ballarat and other Councillors

Justine Linley, CEO of the City of Ballarat

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 and we are grateful for the warm welcome to country.

Tony and I are absolutely delighted to be here with you, and thank the Mayor, Councillors and CEO of the City of Ballarat for gathering you together so that we might thank you for the multitude of contributions you make to this city and the wider region.

Of course, we have been to Ballarat many times. In his former life as a judge, my husband actually spent up to a month here every year, for a number of years. And I have a link in that my late grandmother spent her childhood here.

We know it's a beautiful city and a gorgeous part of our State, and one that offers a particularly attractive lifestyle to those who live here.

Although we have of course been here since I have been Governor, this longer stay has given us a new lens through which to view Ballarat and the surrounds.

In particular, I have been struck by just how enriched you are by the majestic history around you, and yet how well focused you are on the contemporary and future needs of this rapidly growing region.

As to the history, like every visitor, we have marvelled this week at the legacy of the gold rush that shines through the beautiful heritage architecture.

Yesterday, we visited Her Majesty's Theatre, one of the 'grand dames' of Victoria's thriving arts scene. What an amazing thought that it precedes the completion of Government House by at least a year.

It was a treat to tour the current works and to understand the complexities – and the solutions – to its modernisation. Once works are completed, it will no doubt continue to delight audiences for centuries to come, as part of your vibrant arts scene.

We explored Sovereign Hill. That left me with several impressions.

First, it seems to get better each time I go there.

Secondly, it does bring out the inner child, and that boiled lolly shop is as attractive as ever!

But also, seeing groups of schoolchildren there, underlined just how much they are learning while having fun. And it was apparent that tourists flock there on a daily basis.

And in that same light, I particularly enjoyed the Eureka Centre and how cleverly it brings to life the story that is so significant to the shaping of Ballarat, Victoria and Australia.

Like all areas of our State, Ballarat has borne the scars of war, and it is important to recognise that devastating time and the loss of so many local young Australians.

That was brought home to us very poignantly when we laid a wreath at the Arch of Victory and we stood before the beautiful and moving Peter Corlett statue of the Grieving Mother.

In addition to that foundational history, this week we have been delighted to see some of the building blocks of the region's bright future.

Yesterday, we toured the Ballarat West Employment Zone, unique in Victoria in terms of the scale of economic land development that will traverse manufacturing, agribusiness, construction, freight, logistics, research and development uses. It was exciting to see how it is progressing.

We saw the fantastic Mars Stadium which can now hold 11,000 spectators. Not only will it continue to unite even more people in sport – something for which Ballarat has long been renowned – but the redeveloped stadium will also bring even more visitors to your city.

We were lucky to see an AFL Competition being played: exuberant schoolgirls enjoying the great facilities and being active. We even allowed ourselves to be “coerced” to don Western Bulldogs scarves.

Otherwise, when it comes to contemporary Ballarat and the future, our optimism has been enhanced by industry we've visited, like mining tech company, Gekko, and by the people we have met.

Amongst them was a group of your women leaders.

We know that every community needs the contribution of 100% of its talent pool in order to prosper, and universally, it is not yet the case that the full complement is drawn upon.

It was a pleasure to meet these leaders, who generously shared their insights and their enthusiastic commitment to the prosperity of Ballarat.

We also had the good fortune to meet the leaders – and some of the students – of Federation University, Ballarat Tech School and the Arts Academy.

How very much you as a region – and we as a State – have to look forward to with the talent you have in these settings, and the terrific industry partnerships that have been established.

May I conclude by saying 'thank you'.

Thank you to the wonderful healthcare and social sector experts with whom we met this week, and all like them, who contribute great care to this busy community.

Thank you to all those pouring their energy, money and confidence into business and industry here.

And thank you to all of the volunteers in this community – people who give so generously of their time, and so often quietly, without expecting acknowledgement or praise. We have noticed you. Your community notices you. And it would simply not be as strong without what you give, despite your own busy lives and family commitments.

Thank you also to the Mayor, Councillors, the CEO and staff at the City of Ballarat who have taken the time to show us so many parts of your great community.

In particular, we are grateful to Clare O'Connor, without whose dedication of time, we could not have seen and enjoyed so much.

Tony and I now look forward to meeting as many of you as we can this afternoon.