



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
VICTORIA

2018 PREMIER'S VOLUNTEER CHAMPIONS AWARDS

Sunday 9th September, 2018

The Honourable Jenny Mikakos MP, Minister for Families and Children, and Minister for Youth Affairs, representing the Premier of Victoria

Ms Gabrielle Williams MP, Parliamentary Secretary for Carers and Volunteers, and Parliamentary Secretary for Health

Mrs Penny Fowler, Chair of the Herald and Weekly Times Ltd, **Mr Grant Fowler** and members of the Murdoch family

**Distinguished guests
Ladies and gentlemen**

First, I acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land upon which we are gathering and pay my respects to Elders past and present, and to Elders here with us. I also thank Aunty Di for her warm Welcome to Country.

I am delighted to welcome you all to Government House this morning.

I can share with you just how much we enjoy every part of this role, and each event that we are fortunate enough to host in this magnificent setting.

But these volunteer awards are especially enjoyable.

They enable us to see the very best of human kindness and generosity, when we look out at this room filled with volunteers.

We appreciate that some of our State's best human assets are with us today.

And we can bask in your goodness, as we listen to the citations, hearing the detail of what you add to every aspect and every corner of life in Victoria.

Of course, from one perspective, we don't need to be here to know it.

We see it. Every day. Across our State. In community groups. Libraries. Schools. Hospitals. Op shops. At sausage sizzles and social enterprises.

But what a privilege it is when we gather you all together: the finest examples of the goodwill that pervades Victoria.

Now, I know that research shows us that volunteering is good for us. We can learn new skills, meet new people and get involved in local communities. We are told that even just short periods of volunteering can make a positive difference to our mood and our happiness.

But all that, I think, is just a happy spin-off.

I don't believe that anyone here has been motivated by such self-interest.

And certainly not by the prospect of these awards. To the contrary. You are motivated by helping others. By making our community better.

And although, of course, we can rely on our elected officials to provide us with the cornerstones of a good and strong community, I think that a truly **great** community is one in which its citizens fully participate and care for each other.

I particularly like the way President Obama put it when he said that the community needs its citizens:

'... Not just when your own narrow interest is at stake, but over the full span of a lifetime... If something needs fixing, then lace up your shoes and do some organizing... Show up. Dive in. Stay at it.'

That is what the volunteers in this room have done.

I know that many of you will feel humbled or embarrassed by this attention today, but you shouldn't.

You make us stronger by your actions. And, you actually make us stronger for thanking you.

And so, on behalf of the people of Victoria, thank you. Thank you for today representing the more than 1.5 million people – about a third of all Victorians - who deliver more than 200 million hours of volunteering every year.

You follow in big footsteps, none bigger than those of a diminutive woman, but a towering figure, Dame Elisabeth Murdoch AC DBE, for whom the major award today is named.

A pillar of the community for the 103 years that she lived, Dame Elisabeth was an extraordinary role model and spoke of the importance of volunteering and service to the community.

She lived true to her philosophy that:

'We're not here for ourselves in the world – we're here to help others.'

Thank you for helping others, and please accept our warmest congratulations on your awards.

And now, I am pleased to invite to the lectern, representing the Premier today, Minister Mikakos.