



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
VICTORIA

VICTORIAN SENIOR OF THE YEAR AWARDS

Tuesday 9 October, 2018

Ms Sharon Knight MP, Parliamentary Secretary for Human Services, representing the Minister for Ageing

Mr Gerard Mansour, Commissioner for Senior Victorians

Mr Mike Lescai, President, Council of the Ageing, Victoria

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 morning.

Tony and I are delighted to welcome you to Government House to present the 2018 Victorian Senior of the Year Awards.

This will be the 36th time these Awards have been given. And this is the fourth year that we have had the pleasure to host the Awards ceremony.

It is an event that inspires me with optimism.

Optimism about the joys that can abound at this senior time of life. And optimism for the contributions that seniors make to the fabric of our community.

Although sometimes we might sense a romanticising of youth all around us, I think we are a generation that is changing that.

Medical advances and enhanced good health are of course major contributors to our enduring strength and energy, perhaps compared to our parents, or even more particularly, our grandparents.

But it is more than that.

Grey hair is no longer seen as a deterrent to a full and rich participation in life in whatever way we choose: whether in paid work, in sporting, artistic or other pursuits, or in voluntary work.

We, the seniors, are out and proud!

We know ourselves. We have grown our families (as much as you ever do!). We are wiser than before. And we know what we want.

Happily for Victoria, it is apparent that what so many seniors do want, is to contribute to our community. What a legacy, for which this State can be truly grateful.

And there is no doubt that, as the custodians of a mature wisdom and stability – finely tuned over many years –seniors really are in an ideal position to offer the benefits of our support and assistance.

We have a long-term knowledge of our community.

In many instances, we have seen – and nurtured – individuals and organisations from small beginnings to robust and solid futures. In others, we have seen the gaps, and quickly recognised how they can best be filled.

As Tony and I travel across Victoria, we see the impact of the volunteering and good work of our senior citizens. In hospitals, Landcare groups, community centres, soup kitchens, Meals on Wheels, Men's Sheds and schools. And everywhere else as well!

You are here today so that we can tell you that these contributions are noticed, not only by those in your immediate sphere of influence, but by those much further afield as well.

And please know that you have been recognised from a very large field of nearly 250,000 Victorian senior volunteers. Almost 400 of them, by the way, are aged over 95....and this number is growing.

Congratulations to all our nominees and Award recipients today. Thank you for everything that you do.

Quite simply, Victoria is greatly enriched by your good will and generosity.

And now it gives me great pleasure to invite Ms Sharon Knight MP, Parliamentary Secretary for Human Services to address us.