



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
VICTORIA

CENTURY CLUB MORNING TEA

Thursday 15 November, 2018

Dame Quentin Bryce AD CVO and Mr Michael Bryce AM AE

All our distinguished guests, most particularly our centenarians

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 all to Government House to celebrate those of you who have joined the Century Club this year by celebrating your 100th birthdays.

So, first, let me say from both of us to each one of you: 'Happy Birthday'.

Let me also say congratulations to all of the family members and friends celebrating with you today. Behind every member of this auspicious club is a team of people offering love, care and support.

You are almost some 4,000 centenarians in Australia. If I am fortunate enough in the future to be a guest here – sitting where you are now sitting, to celebrate my own 100th birthday, I am expected to be one of 40,000. That's how fast our life expectancy is changing.

But, back to you, our centenarians. Mostly babies of 1918.

The year of your birth saw the conclusion of the Great war that had gripped the globe. The guns fell silent in Europe as you cried and learned to crawl amidst the skirts – the long skirts – of your mothers.

Many of you were born in Melbourne or regional Victoria, but I know that many others were born elsewhere in the world, and have made Australia your home at some time in the past century.

Of course, in the hundred years between your birth and today, the world has changed such an extraordinary amount.

You have seen the invention of antibiotics, the meteoric rise of television and the more recent role of computers and the internet. You have even seen a mare called Winx winning four Cox plates in a row!

You have witnessed the exploration of space and the pursuit of new astronomical frontiers, and seen the world shrink as planes criss-cross the skies and mobile and smart phones and social media have made the whole world more connected.

And you have marvelled at the four minute mile, the phenomenon that was The Beatles, seen the Don play great cricket, read books from *The Great Gatsby* to *Harry Potter* and possibly lined up to see a young Queen Elizabeth pass by whilst here on a visit.

You certainly experienced another World War – the heartache, the deprivation, the pride in victory, and the energy of rebuilding our country thereafter.

And in your personal lives, you have experienced the shift from the innocence of childhood through adulthood and all the associated responsibilities. You may have cared for children or grandchildren (or great-grandchildren). You may have spent your considerable years in dedication to your career. Or in service to your community. Or, doing all those things at the same time!

I can only tell you that we are always in awe of all that our centenarians have achieved.

In the past few years, when Tony and I have hosted this event, we have noted common qualities amongst you. Resilience, humour, optimism and an openness to change.

Perhaps – through you – we have uncovered the secret to longevity!

I know that many of you have travelled long distances to join us here. Thank you for the efforts involved in the journey.

Thank you too for all of your efforts in and contributions to your communities across the past 100 years.

To help us celebrate you this morning, we are delighted to be hosting the most gorgeous choir.

The Girls from Oz, shall shortly perform for us. They have travelled from regional Western Australia and Far North Queensland to sing for Melbourne audiences. And we are delighted that they will be joined by Australian Girls' Choir performers from Melbourne.

It is an additional pleasure that the choir's Patron, - and Australians much loved former Governor-General Dame Quentin Bryce AD CVO, and Mr Bryce, are also joining us as our guests today. I am delighted that you will have the opportunity to meet with them shortly.

Finally, thank you all for sharing this birthday party with me and with Tony, and with one another. We look forward to meeting and chatting with you.