



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
VICTORIA

VICTORIAN RACING CLUB CHAIRMAN'S DINNER

Thursday 1 November, 2018

The Honourable Martin Pakula MP, Minister for Racing

The Honourable Jaala Pulford, Minister for Agriculture & Regional Development

The Honourable John Brumby AO, former Premier, State of Victoria

The Right Honourable the Lord Mayor Sally Capp, Lord Mayor City of Melbourne

Mrs Amanda Elliot, Chairman, Victoria Racing Club and the Board

Distinguished guests from home and abroad

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 evening.

Tony and I thank the Chairman and the VRC for hosting us at this special dinner.

And let me assure you that the perspective from here is a particularly fine one.

I see a room containing many of Victoria's leaders, in a splendid new building with a spectacular view, with the Chairman's good eye cast over each detail for this evening, and I know that we are being treated to some of the best of our local produce.

But, in fact, I see so much more.

I see what we have to celebrate as we gather together.

We celebrate an event. Not just any event. One of our city's favourite and longest-standing major events. The Spring Racing Carnival.

Major events are important to Melbourne. Our rich calendar of international and local arts and sporting events, our galleries, museums, libraries and stadia, our courts and our tracks are all central to our renowned liveability, and one of the underpinnings of our robust economy and rapidly growing population.

Our major events bring us together. Families mingle and marvel when our Royal Botanic Gardens are illuminated by French pyrotechnics. We all share the thrill when we see a magnificent horse flash down the strait for her 29th consecutive win.

Our major events bring tourists flocking, from other parts of our country and from overseas.

There is no better example than racing which, through the carnival, brings more than 70,000 tourists to join us.

In particular, we celebrate its international flavour, in this most cosmopolitan city with its wide global outlook.

We celebrate the horses and jockeys, the trainers and strappers, because in our sports mad city, we do love and appreciate all of our elite performers – four legged, as well as two!

And this magnificent new Club Stand gives us much more to celebrate.

In a city known for its love of art and design, each curve, each floral reference and each bespoke finish stirs our pride and appreciation for what it says of our design credentials, and for what it adds to our skyline, let alone what it promises to add to the racing experience of future generations.

But it speaks to us of something else of particular importance. It is something that resonates with me, given my past experience on the governing body of another of our nation's favourite sports.

That is, that those who sit on the governing Committees, Boards or Commissions are no more than the temporary custodians of our sports and our clubs.

Their role is to ensure that they pass on their sport, their code or their club in better condition than when they started.

It takes courage and boldness to make decisions not just for now, but for the future. The hard decisions. The aspirational (and sometimes risky) decisions. Decisions that do not necessarily attract quick or easy gain.

The ones, though, that will see an organization advance - not just hold steady. The ones that will underpin the success of in this instance the club, and its future leaders.

And so, standing here, I see the vision of successive VRC Boards, and sponsors and government and all those who contribute to the Club's success.

And I am left in no doubt that you are a part of an industry that makes a very substantial contribution to Victoria's economy.

And finally, I am conscious of two things that the VRC does very well: tradition and evolution.

As to tradition, it is a pleasure for me to follow the 27 Governors of Victoria before me who have fully participated in the Melbourne Cup. (Poor Lieutenant-Governor La Trobe and Governor Hotham were in office too early). As Victoria's 6th Governor, Lord Normanby, wrote to his successor, Sir Henry Loch, in the late 19th century: 'For a Governor not to attend the Flemington Races....' would be '....a kind of High Treason'.

But you have evolved across the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries to run a modern event. One that reaches all Victorians and many millions beyond our border and beyond our shores.

Congratulations to the VRC and thank you.