



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
VICTORIA

AUSTRALIA DAY FLAG RAISING CEREMONY

Saturday 26 January, 2019

The Honourable Jacinta Allan MP, Acting Premier of Victoria

The Honourable Michael O'Brien MP, Leader of the Opposition

The Right Honourable Sally Capp, Lord Mayor of Melbourne

Mr Shane Patton, Deputy Commissioner of Victoria Police

Senior Members of the Australian Defence Force and the Consular Corps

Dr Susan Alberti AC, Chair of the Australia Day Committee of Victoria

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, boys and girls

First, I acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land upon which we are gathering. I pay my respects to their Elders past and present and to any Elders here with us this morning. And I thank Aunty Joy for her warm welcome.

Today is a day we gather together to celebrate being Australian.

There will be street parades, singing and dancing and gatherings around barbecues and picnic tables, on beaches, in homes and in the serenity of our beautiful countryside.

But it is also a day that prompts us to reflect on what it actually means to be Australian.

It is difficult to find one simple definition, one definitive description.

We are one, but we are many.

You will recognise that as the line of a popular song that many Australians will sing today, in addition to our national anthem.

What is it that we so warm to in that song, '*I am, you are, we are Australian*', written by 'Seeker' Bruce Woodley and Dobe Newton, just over 30 years ago now?

I think it is the encapsulation of how our ancient land has evolved into our young nation.

It appeals to us because it properly starts with the first Australians – those from the dream-time – the keepers of the flame for more than forty thousand years.... before the tall ships came.

It then evokes the history of those who came on prison ships '*bowed down by iron chains*'.

It remembers the settlers, the diggers, the bushies, the battlers, the women and the children of the depression.

And it recognises the icons like artist Albert Namatjira, and the fellows of our folklore like Clancy on his horse and the one who waltzed Matilda.

But I think that our favourite part of the song is definitely the refrain:

*We are one, but we are many
And from all the lands on earth we come
We share a dream and sing with one voice:
I am, you are, we are Australian.*

It reflects the many waves of migration that have contributed to our development as a nation: a diversity to be celebrated every day, but with special recognition on a day such as this, when we pause to gather with each other.

In modern Australia, in 2019, as we see a gathering of a crowd that comes from all these lands, we can feel pride. A shared pride - for what we have achieved together.

But our pride is at its best if we match it with a shared commitment. That is, to continue to do all that we can do – individually and collectively – to warmly welcome and support those who

come to settle with us, to ensure that the bounty of life in our wonderful State is shared between us, and to see to it that we and our children, and their children, can live together in unity and harmony.

That leads me back to our National Anthem.

Although the first verse is of course the one most commonly sung, the words of the second verse give us the simple and beautiful focus for how to live together, when we sing:

*'With courage let us all combine
To advance Australia Fair.'*

I particularly welcome the reminder to us to combine with '*courage*'.

It is realistic.

It does sometimes require courage to live side by side with people from different backgrounds and cultures, to learn to know and to understand each other.

It takes courage to recognise the truth of our history. Not to shy away from the discussions about its effect on our indigenous Australians. To promote and pursue reconciliation between us.

It takes courage to express strong views, different views, but to do it respectfully and peacefully. And it takes courage to call out what is unfair or hurtful to others.

So, today gives us the opportunity to count our blessings as Australians, and to remember our continuing aspirations.

It is also a chance to say 'thank you'. Thank you to all those who lead us with courage. Those who serve our country overseas. Who fight our fires. Or who work hard every day to lend a helping hand to those in need.

There is one other thing about today!

It provides an opportunity for everyone to relax and enjoy being with each other.

For those of you with a flexible plan in mind today, consider strolling just down St Kilda Road to the Open Day at your Government House. Wander through the magnificent house and gardens. Enjoy a huge range of family activities. Everyone is welcome.

And to each one of you, we extend every warm wish for today and the year ahead.