



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
VICTORIA

CONSULAR CORPS DINNER

Monday 18 February 2019

The Honourable Daniel Andrews MP, Premier of Victoria

and **Mrs Catherine Andrews**

The Honourable Shaun Leane MP, President of the Legislative Council and **Mrs Paula Leane**

The Honourable Colin Brooks MP, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly and **Mrs Melinda Brooks**

The Honourable Ted Baillieu, former Premier of Victoria

and **Mrs Robyn Baillieu**

The Honourable Bruce Atkinson MP

The Honourable Phillip Dalidakis MP

The Right Honourable Sally Capp, Lord Mayor of Melbourne

Mr Graham Ashton AM APM, Chief Commissioner, Victoria Police

Mr Andrew Crisp APM, Emergency Services Commissioner

Commodore Greg Yorke CSC RANR, Senior Naval Officer Victoria

Air Commodore Glen Braz AM, CSC, DSM, Senior Air Force Officer Victoria

Ms Jenny Bloomfield, State Director, DFAT

Mr Ernesto Duenas, Consul General, El Salvador & Dean of the Consular Corps

Consuls General

All distinguished guests

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 are delighted to be joining you for the annual Consular Corps Melbourne dinner – this time with the twist of being at the start rather than at the end of the year.

Usually, we meet with the happy expectation that a year of hard work is nearing its end – when we are savouring the prospect of holidays, time to recharge our batteries with family and friends and a much-needed rest.

This evening we gather after the satisfaction of a warm summer break. I hope that you, like me and Tony, are feeling energised by the freshness of a new year.

I am far too ‘mature’ to believe that resolutions made on the cusp of a new year are likely to survive beyond a few days or weeks. And so, I don’t make them. Like everyone though, I do reflect on my aspirations for the coming year.

In addition to always planning to shed a kilo or more after summer excesses, or rather hoping that maybe there will soon be a grandchild or two, I naturally wish for good health for me and my loved ones. And for happiness for each of us in every possible way.

I am certain there is a commonality – in fact, a universality – in those things that we wish for ourselves and our families.

When it comes to our respective communities, I know that we also have common aspirations.

We all seek peace and prosperity.

You know that I don’t choose those two concepts at random. They are, of course, the words of our State motto.

I like that choice of words. I see them as much broader in meaning than they might at first appear.

‘Peace’ incorporates so very much. Living without conflict. In safety. Surrounded by a caring community.

We are blessed in Australia to live in peace.

In Victoria, we profit, in particular, from the diversity of our people. We are, as you know well, a melting-pot of backgrounds, faiths and cultures.

You, our Consular Corps are great contributors to the harmony of our diverse community – closely connected to almost every part of it.

We are conscious – and appreciative – of how hard you work to facilitate the connections between us. You do so much to promote the people to people connections that are the lifeblood of our relationships.

Thank you. And may we continue to work together in those meaningful ways.

And so, to ‘prosperity’. Prosperity means that we flourish. Economically of course. But also as individuals, families and as a State.

I am proud of our State when it comes to its growth, its stability and its performance.

It may sound immodest to say that. But my perspective as the Governor – not a completely unbiased perspective, of course – does allow me to see much of which I am indeed proud.

You know that we are in a popular and a buoyant part of our country. In the fastest growing State. In the liveable city that will soon be our nation’s biggest.

I hope that in your time here, you are enjoying our wonderful gardens, restaurants, the sports precinct and experiencing our many major events, The Australian Open tennis and Formula 1 Grand Prix, for example, are front of mind in this early part of the year.

I hope too that you might be seeing some of the NGV blockbusters that make our gallery the 16th most visited gallery in the world, or taking in the Harry Potter show, starting here, next weekend, Melbourne hosting its first staging outside London and New York.

I am proud of these things. As I am of our biomedical precinct, and our innovation across agriculture, defence and aerospace, mining equipment and technology, sports technology and games, to name just a few areas of great enterprise.

But I am particularly conscious that each of you has much of which to be proud in your countries too.

And there is no doubt that our respective strengths can be heightened – we can each prosper more – when we collaborate with each other.

That is the recurring theme of conversations when we travel overseas to represent Victoria.

May I take this opportunity to thank all of you who have helped us prepare for such trips during the last year. You have assisted with informative advice about where we are heading, and provided invaluable introductions.

Your work in that and other regards is much appreciated. As is the pleasure we take in seeing you at so many events in Government House and across Victoria.

I don't think I need to apologise for any bias this time, if I say that I feel proud that we have the best Consular Corps in the country!

I am pleased that this evening gives us the opportunity to say some 'thank you's'.

First, 'thank you' to the Consul General for El Salvador, Ernesto Duenas, your Dean, for his leadership of the Corps.

Of course, 'thank you' to the unstoppable Trent Smyth. Each new consul I meet tells me how much you, Trent, have helped them in the settling process. You remind me of the wonderful AFL footballers we see who show such style and grace that, no matter how busy it is on the field of play, they make every move look effortless, and as if they have all the time in the world. (For our new Consuls – the best ones play for Essendon – so you might like to get on board!).

Despite your busy workload, you devote so much to our Consular Corps, and to this wonderful dinner that we are enjoying.

In fact, Tony and I thank you all. And we wish 'Peace and Prosperity' for you all, as well as your families and the countries that you represent.