



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
VICTORIA

**OPENING OF LA TROBE UNIVERSITY  
SPORTS PARK PAVILION**

**Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> March 2019**

**Professor Richard Larkins AC**, Chancellor of La Trobe University

**The Honourable John Brumby AO**, former Premier of Victoria and incoming Chancellor of La Trobe University

**Professor John Dewar**, Vice-Chancellor and President,  
La Trobe University

**The Honourable Colin Brooks MP**, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly  
and Member for Bundoora

**Members of State and Federal Parliament**

**Mayors and Councillors of local governments**

**Distinguished guests one and all**

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 who are here with us.

Today provides a unique opportunity for me. Never before – in what is approaching four years as the Governor of Victoria – have I opened a complex for which I had previously turned the first sod.

On 4 August 2016, Tony and I visited La Trobe University to turn the first sod for this development. Right here – where this Sports Park Pavilion now stands.

Let me share something with you. That day, there was no speech, no formality, no apparent pressure on me: just a few of us, a photographer ... and a shovel.

You might think that was an easy engagement, compared with this larger gathering – where I must at least hold your interest, if not add some value to the occasion.

I can tell you this. Today is a pleasure. On that last occasion, I encountered the hardest sod with which I have ever had to deal. Let's just say that I can assure you that this pavilion has solid foundations!

It is also a pleasure to be here today, as La Trobe University has been front and centre in my thinking in recent days and weeks, with the upcoming installation of The Honourable John Brumby AO as the University's eighth Chancellor.

Now, as you are all well aware, La Trobe University has just turned fifty. So, it is no longer 'young' in university terms. (Human terms, of course, are very different!)

In its half-century, La Trobe has certainly made its mark in many spheres.

Its contribution to our State's rich sporting life is one of its great contributions.

Victoria is a State deeply invested in its sporting culture. Sport is, as you know, deeply embedded in our DNA. Victoria 'punches above its weight' in the sports events and achievements that we can claim.

It has always been so. The city of Melbourne was officially founded in 1835. Within just three years, the Melbourne Cricket Club was established. Our State's – and my own - favourite sport, Australian Rules Football, started in the 1850's. The Melbourne Cup shortly after, in 1861.

And today, Melbourne is known for its calendar of major sporting events – including the Australian Open, Formula One Grand Prix and the Spring Racing Carnival.

Sport matters.

It helps to define us. It inspires us. It entertains us.

It is important to us at both the elite and the grassroots level.

It is essential to our physical and mental health. It keeps us fit. It brings us together. It builds a sense of community. A sense of belonging. It fosters inclusion. A resilience from being a part of a team, a participant – or even as a spectator.

Our sporting codes have often provided the platform for conversations on complex and otherwise uncomfortable community issues. Around diversity, gender equality, sexuality, drugs, or bullying, for example.

Sport also contributes so much to our economy. In jobs. Through events. And from sports technology. Indeed, when it comes to technology in training and monitoring, apparel, equipment and events, the Australian Sports Technology Network estimates that 65% of national sports businesses, research institutes, distributors and retailers, service providers and investors are based in Victoria.

This new sports precinct – will make an important contribution to our State, providing an opportunity for sport, active recreation, teaching and research in sport.

Certainly La Trobe University students have the benefit of these outstanding facilities. But so too does the wider community.

It is already being used by clubs such as Carlton FC, the AFL Women's and VFL Women's teams, so that it supports major sports competitions as well as active recreational use.

This facility – and the completion of the first stage of the Park – is an important milestone in both the history and future of La Trobe University. It is a crucial part of La Trobe's vision for a University City of the Future.

I'd like to acknowledge the leadership of Vice-Chancellor and President of La Trobe University Professor John Dewar and Professor Russell Hoye, Pro Vice Chancellor (Research Development) and Director, La Trobe Sport.

I would like to thank the outgoing Chancellor, Professor Richard Larkins AC, as well as the board, for their role in bringing these facilities to fruition. These beautiful buildings are a testament to your hard work and vision for this University.

Shortly, it will give me great pleasure to officially open the Pavilion.