



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
VICTORIA

## **SPECIAL OLYMPICS UNIFORM PRESENTATION**

**Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> February 2019**

**Ms Corene Strauss**, CEO, Special Olympics Australia

**Mr Fred Oldfield**, Vice-President Melbourne Cricket Club and Chairman Melbourne Cricket Club Foundation

**Mr Stuart Fox**, CEO, Melbourne Cricket Club

**Mr Graham Ashton AM APM**, Chief Commissioner, Victoria Police

**Senior Sergeant Michael Olsen APM**, President, Law Enforcement Torch Run Victoria Athletes

**Distinguished guests**

**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 morning.

Tony and I are so happy to be here today to present the Victorian athletes participating in the Special Olympics with their uniforms.

It is a pleasure to say 'Hello' to you all. Actually 'Hello again', as we met many of you in Canberra last year when we celebrated the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Special Olympics with you.

We saw then your enthusiasm for your sports, and the mounting excitement as you prepared for the 2019 Games.

How fitting it is that today we meet you here at our much loved MCG, the home of cricket, of AFL (our national passion), the site of the 1956 Melbourne Olympics and the 2006 Commonwealth Games, and so many other fantastic sporting events.

What a perfect setting for this presentation.

You, like countless other athletes over the course of the MCG's history, have earned your place here today through hard work, determination, grit and support from friends, family and the community.

But you have done and continue to do much more than that.

Through your energy and tenacity, you help remind us all that there is no place for discrimination against people with intellectual disabilities. You teach us about inclusion, and that we can always include and celebrate different abilities.

The Special Olympics are a wonderfully unifying event. The competitions are real and intensely fought. But instead of being divided on the playing field, everyone is united.

And so, our Special Olympians lead by example, inviting the whole world to unite behind them.

I would like to acknowledge the vision and leadership of Special Olympics Australia, without whom this event would not be possible. And of course, the generosity of the MCC, who are hosting this morning.

Thank you to all those who work behind the scenes – particularly the volunteers, family members and businesses – who help to make the Special Olympics a reality.

I would particularly like to thank Victoria Police for their support of the Law Enforcement Torch Run Victoria, under the leadership of its President, Senior Sergeant Michael Olsen APM. It is only fitting that you launched today's events with the lighting of the caludron.

The work you have done here in Victoria since 2008, to raise awareness and funds for Special Olympics Australia, has provided an opportunity for countless Victorian athletes to participate in the Special Olympics.

Finally, may I wish our athletes the very best of luck for the upcoming games in Abu Dhabi. 105 Australian athletes will be amongst the 7,000 participants from 170 countries.

Forgive the bias of the Governor of Victoria, if I note with pride that 17 of the team are from our wonderful State of Victoria.

Good luck to you all. Although, I am well aware that your abilities, combined with the courage that you possess, makes luck redundant.

Your extraordinary achievements have already made your State and nation proud. Enjoy the Games!