



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
VICTORIA

**A RECEPTION TO MARK THE ASCENSION
THE NEW EMPEROR OF JAPAN**

Monday 6th May 2019

Mr Josh Bull MP, Parliamentary Secretary for Multicultural Affairs, representing the **Premier** and the **Minister for Multicultural Affairs**

The Honourable David Davis MP, representing the Leader of the Opposition

Mr Kazuyoshi Matsunaga, Consul-General of Japan and **Mrs Yoko Matsunaga**

Mayors and Councillors

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 afternoon. Secondly, I thank Consul-General Matsunaga and Mrs Matsunaga for their warm welcome.

It is always a pleasure to join you, our friends, and to be a guest in this beautiful residence. But the more so, when it is to mark a particularly auspicious occasion.

We are delighted to be with you today to celebrate the ascension last week of His Majesty Emperor Naruhito as Japan's 126th emperor, part of a lineage that – extraordinarily - extends back to 600 B.C.

We admire and respect Japan's ancient country and culture.

But we also admire and respect Japan's place in the contemporary global environment. As Governor, I know the strength of the friendship between Australia and Japan. I have been fortunate enough to experience the generosity of Japanese hospitality on many occasions - as a tourist in your country.

But also, in 2015 - soon after my inauguration into this role - we were privileged to undertake an Official visit to Tokyo, and to Aichi Prefecture with which, of course, the State of Victoria has now shared a sister relationship for almost four decades.

During that visit, we had the pleasure of being exposed to some of the finest examples of Japanese industry, ingenuity, arts and culture. And to see just some of your rich historical treasures, such as the magnificent Nagoya Castle.

Since then, we have enjoyed the opportunity at Government House to host the 54th Annual Australia- Japan Joint Business Conference, and subsequently a reception for the Australia- Japan Youth Dialogue, as well as many senior representatives from your country.

We know well that the warm relationship between us is underpinned by the strong government to government, business to business and people to people links that we share.

And so we are delighted to acknowledge this significant occasion in Japan's history: the beginning of the new Reiwa era in Japan.

Reiwa, I understand, signifies 'beautiful harmony', and I note that His Majesty spoke last week of his prayer '*for the happiness of [his] people and the further development of the nation as well as the peace of the world.*'

On behalf of the people of Victoria, may I take this opportunity to acknowledge the 30 year long and admired reign of His Majesty Emperor Emeritus Akihito and with him, Her Majesty Empress Emerita Michiko, across the Heisei era.

And may I wish Their Majesties Emperor Naruhito and Empress Masako good health, strength and fulfilment for themselves, and peace and prosperity for their country, in what we hope will be a long period of beautiful harmony for them and for Japan.

Finally, may I thank you again Consul-General and Mrs Matsunaga for hosting me today, and for your own contributions to the important relationship between Victoria and Japan.