



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
VICTORIA

## **MERGER OF FOUNDATION 59 AND MORNINGTON PENINSULA FOUNDATION RECEPTION**

**Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2019**

**Mr Ian Hicks AM**, Chair, Mornington Peninsula Foundation

**Mr David Dyer**, Former Chair, Foundation 59  
and all **MPF Board Members**

**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 evening.

Tony and I are delighted to welcome you here to mark the merger of Foundation 59 and Mornington Peninsula Foundation.

Tonight recognises generosity on a number of levels.

It recognises the generosity of philanthropy, directed towards reducing socio-economic disadvantage on the Mornington Peninsula, by supporting education, community connections and economic independence.

It recognises such generosity not only in terms of the funds donated, but also in terms of the vision, the leadership, the time and the wisdom that have been attached to that giving.

And it recognises an extraordinary generosity of spirit in the coming together of two organisations, Foundation 59 and Mornington Peninsula Foundation which, by uniting, will be stronger in their shared vision.

It is a pleasure to host this reception in celebration of the merger, and the promise and optimism that it represents, whilst recognising and acknowledging the significant work of both organisations prior to this new union.

The Mornington Peninsula is a magnificent part of our State. It features a beautiful coastline, ecologically diverse hinterland and thriving industry. Of particular note, its horticulture, food, wine, art and tourism are significant factors in attracting local, national and international visitors alike. Like many Victorians, Tony and I enjoy spending time there.

Despite such beauty and success, there are communities on the Peninsula challenged by disadvantage.

As many others would be, I was shocked to learn that one in seven children there live below the poverty line. And nearly 1000 young people of school age are not engaged in any education, training or employment.

Nine years ago, Foundation 59 identified and began addressing such disadvantage, by raising and distributing funds.

I hope that co-founders Sarah Darling and Sandy Murdoch, members of their families, other supporters and Foundation 59 volunteers – those here, and those who could not be - feel enormous pride. It must be like watching a child you have reared head off into the adult world. I well know the mixture of excitement and wistfulness one feels at that moment.

But this is a 'child' with great credits to its name already.

Since its creation, Foundation 59 has supported a range of successful projects focused on improving the educational, emotional and social wellbeing of children and young people. The importance of school attendance and school completion have been promoted.

Mornington Peninsula Foundation's achievements are equally as impressive.

Like Foundation 59, your roots are to be found in generous philanthropy, in particular through Ian Hicks and his family, via the George Hicks Foundation, that very generously supports the Mornington Peninsula Foundation.

Since its beginning, the strength of MPF has been in its ability to bring philanthropists and funders together to create partnerships with community organisations and local councils.

This model - of leveraging existing projects by developing partnerships - enables a more coordinated and cohesive approach to tackling social disadvantage.

With an already strong network of primary schools and preschools, local councils and community organisations, the amalgamation with Foundation 59 enables MPF to work towards deepening the focus on early years education, family support, youth engagement and the prevention of homelessness.

MPF's newly established No Limits program is an example of what can be achieved since the union with Foundation 59. This \$1.05 million, 3-year program will support oral language development for over 500 children aged four to five in local kindergartens and primary schools.

I am particularly conscious that this great work is supported by a volunteer Board, under the stewardship and vision of Chair, Ian Hicks AM.

It is too easy to forget that Boards are comprised of volunteers, generously giving both their time and their considerable skills.

And thank you also to the former Board members of Foundation 59, and its Chair David Dyer.

And the heartiest of thanks to the supporters and philanthropists who will enable this new chapter of MPF to grow from strength to strength.