



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
VICTORIA

Northern Grampians Civic Reception

Wednesday 15th May 2019

Councillor Kevin Erwin, Mayor Northern Grampians Shire Council and **Councillors**

Mr Michael Baily, CEO, Northern Grampians Shire Council

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.

Tony and I are delighted to be visiting this wonderful region of Victoria, and thank the Northern Grampians Shire Council for their warm welcome, and for the informative and engaging program that has been arranged for us.

In fact, this is our second visit in a few short months.

In February, we had the pleasure of a guided tour of Central Park and the impressive museum collection of the Stawell Gift.

We also met with Shire councillors, to be introduced to the growth and emerging opportunities for employment and investment in the region. Thank you for inviting us back to experience and learn more of what this beautiful region of Victoria has to offer.

Yesterday, we toured the historic **Seppelt Vineyard's Cellars**. It was a wonderful step through history, and the opportunity to learn about the connection with early Governors of Victoria who – on their own tours of this region – made sure they stopped there.

We toured the **Stawell Sports and Aquatic Centre**. What a great community asset. The facilities are terrific but so are the programs. It is impressive to see such a thoughtful approach to community well-being.

We were pleased to visit the **Stawell War Memorial** yesterday, where I laid a wreath on behalf of all Victorians to honour the legacy of the local heroes. I cannot help but think that it was in the smaller communities of our State that the heartache of loss was magnified. Every family, every workplace and every organisation in the community, feeling loss so directly.

I am pleased to hear that the hard work of the RSL is paying off, with increasing numbers gathering to remember, each ANZAC Day.

We started today as every day should ideally start: up close with nature at its finest on the **Grampians Trail Walk to Lakeview lookout**. We have walked in the Grampians before. It is magnificent.

This was followed by a visit to one of the most significant cultural sites in south eastern Australia, **Bunjil's Shelter**, which helped us appreciate the rich indigenous history of this part of Australia, going back so many millennia.

We toured the **Stawell Gold Mine**, and have a heightened appreciation of the investment, skill and patience that mining demands.

And we visited Bulgana Green Power Hub and met with the connections of Nectar Farms. The marriage of the renewable energy and state of the art glasshouse production holds such great promise for industry, the environment and the community.

And we still have more to see tomorrow in St Arnaud, and are very much looking forward to it.

People do often ask why we are making a particular visit. The answer is simple. I am the Governor for the whole of Victoria – not just Melbourne – and so it is essential to be out and about. Some of our cleverest innovation, most important industry and the most generous volunteering is in the regions. This part of the State is no exception.

Overall, we have seen a Shire that is capitalising on a diverse range of industries, agriculture, tourism, wine, gold mining and energy. It is promoting its long and proud history, and working on health and well-being. It is indeed a pleasure to be here.

Thank you all for your hospitality. Thank you to Rosanne Baird at the Shire who has helped to organise this visit for us. Thank you all for coming, and we look forward to meeting as many of you as we can this afternoon.