



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
VICTORIA

## **CELEBRATING THE NORTH RECEPTION**

**Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> June 2019**

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

**Dr Samantha Ratnam**, Leader of the Victorian Greens Party and **State and Federal Members of Parliament**

**Mayors and Councillors**

**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 here with us this evening.

Tony and I are delighted to welcome you all here to Government House this evening.

Perhaps some of you were not entirely sure why you were invited when you received your invitation. I know that it told you that you were invited to a reception celebrating the community to the north of Melbourne, but let me make it a little clearer as to what that means.

A significant part of the Governor's role, in addition to constitutional and ceremonial duties, and the promotion of Victoria's social and economic interests here and overseas, is community engagement.

That entails meeting Victorians from all over our State, learning about their strengths and their needs, encouraging social unity and harmony, and most often of all, thanking them for their clever work and kind and generous contributions to the community, made in every imaginable way.

After my first year or so as the Governor of Victoria, Tony and I recognised that there were some parts of our community that were less familiar than others when it came to the Governor's role and the work that takes place here at Government House.

It meant that, in some instances, they did not know to seek us out to celebrate with them their significant anniversaries, events or achievements.

It also meant that we might miss the opportunity to say 'Thank you' to so many wonderful Victorians who should be thanked. And that we could therefore also miss the chance to inspire others by shining a light on such significant contributions.

And so, we are pleased to host you all this evening so that we can gather those from the northern part of our city and some parts beyond, and to focus on the many successes of which you are a part.

You represent business, education, employment services, food and beverage growers, manufacturers, health and health services, infrastructure and engineering, research and innovation, science and technology, sports and federal, state and local government, community organisations – and more!

Like other Victorians, you are enriched by your diversity.

Many of you were born overseas, in countries such as China, England, Greece, India, Iraq, Italy, Lebanon, Macedonia, New Zealand, Pakistan or Turkey.

Many of you speak languages other than English at home, and you have a range of different religious affiliations, indicative of our ancestry and our various waves of migration.

Your part of our State is renowned for its share of natural beauty – some of the State's most treasured rivers and creeks, treed suburbs, parklands and bush.

The north is renowned for major hospitals such as the Austin and the Northern Hospitals.

You host a range of manufacturing and research hubs, and it will be exciting to watch the Arden Urban Renewal Precinct develop into an area of further innovation, with its focus on technology, life sciences, health and education – as well as community hubs, new schools and open spaces.

Higher Education is writ large in the north. It is an area in which it is possible to study from preschool to PhD without changing postcodes.

It abounds in vocational education and training, with Institutes such as Kangan and Melbourne Polytechnic.

The northern part of Melbourne is of course home to La Trobe University. Now over 50 years' old, La Trobe is ranked highly on all of the ranking tables, including as one of the world's top 40 universities for sports-related subjects. It employs over 3,200 staff, and is such an important part of the community.

Another top Victorian university, RMIT, is also a part of the north. It is, with La Trobe, a foundation partner in Melbourne's food industry innovation precinct, working towards doubling Melbourne's food industry in the next 10 years, to ensure that the northern region will become a major food industry hub.

Given that you are home to wineries and vineyards, and olive, berry and cheese farms, as well as Melbourne Market – set on a vast 70 hectares and housing 5,000 wholesale food related businesses – the area is very much at the heart of our food supply chain.

Aware of the breadth of your backgrounds, your talents and skills and achievements, may I make one request of you this evening.

We have an Australian Honours system that recognises excellence, achievement or meritorious service and contributions to our society.

It is important to the fabric of a community that such recognition is given – that we celebrate and thank those who make us all stronger. And that we inspire others to follow suit.

But for our honours system to be at its best, it needs to be a true representation of all its citizens.

I am sure that each of you know people who you think might deserve to be honoured, women as well as men, those from the regions as well as the cities and those from every different background and discipline too.

Please do make sure that you go to the Australian Honours website and see how to make nominations. There are so many worthy people in the northern part of our City and State.

That leaves me only to say that although we have visited and are already very familiar with many of the organisations represented here amongst you, we are pleased for this opportunity to congratulate and thank each one of you this evening.

And it will be a further pleasure to meet so many more of you shortly, and to learn of your interests and achievements.

But first, may I introduce the Honourable Colin Brooks MP, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly and Member for Bundoora, to address us.