



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
VICTORIA

AUSTRALIAN CITIZENSHIP CEREMONY

Wednesday 28th August 2019

The Honourable Alan Tudge MP, Federal Minister for Population, Cities and Urban Infrastructure

Ms Rosemary Wilmot, Acting Regional Director for Victoria and Tasmania, Department of Home Affairs

Conferees

All 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.

That acknowledgement is important, particularly as we gather here today in this House which stands on land that was nurtured and cared for by Indigenous people across many millennia.

Let me start by saying how delighted Tony and I are to welcome you to Government House on this very important occasion.

It is a special day for you. And it is a special day for us.

For you, it is a momentous step, to adopt all the rights and responsibilities as the citizen of a new country.

We know that some of you have lived here for many years.

Others have arrived more recently.

For some, the process of adjusting to life in Australia may have been fairly smooth.

For others, it may have been harder.

There are likely to be many mixed emotions amongst you.

And then, of course, for the little ones here, some of them may have no memory at all or little memory of any home other than here in Australia.

I said it is a special day for us as well as for you. By us, I mean all the other citizens of Australia, and of course our State of Victoria.

Today we have the joy of welcoming new citizens amongst us. People who, like us all, share hopes and dreams for themselves, their families and their communities.

Many of you have already contributed a great deal to our workforce, our student body, our neighbourhoods and our communities. And we warmly welcome the prospect of your future contributions.

You join a wonderfully diverse group here in Victoria. Almost 50% of us were born overseas, or have one parent born overseas.

I am one of them. It makes this ceremony particularly dear to me on a personal level.

My father arrived in Melbourne in 1929 from Europe. Like some of you, he came to Australia under difficult circumstances. Like many of you, he came in search of a better life for his children and family. He could never have imagined that his youngest child - his daughter - would one day become the Governor of Victoria.

But it is a privilege for me to conduct this Citizenship Ceremony not only for those personal reasons. It is important, given the Governor's role.

The Governor represents Her Majesty the Queen as Victoria's Head of State.

In addition to guarding the Constitution on behalf of the people of Victoria - making sure Parliament acts within its boundaries - and officiating at ceremonial occasions such as ANZAC Day or Australia Day, the Governor represents and promotes our State's economic, social and cultural interests, here and overseas.

And a significant part of the Governor's role is in bringing Victorians together, celebrating their successes, and supporting Victoria's diverse and vibrant community.

Today, we welcome individuals and families from a diverse range of countries: Israel, Colombia, Hungary, the UK, Belgium, Djibouti, Somalia, India, South Korea, Tonga, Armenia, South Africa, Cyprus, Brazil, France, Indonesia, New Zealand, Nepal, Trinidad and Tobago and China.

Congratulations to each one of you, and may you and your families find – in accordance with our State motto - 'Peace and Prosperity' here.

I sincerely hope that you love this country and our State as much my family and I do.