



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
VICTORIA

VICTORIAN AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR AWARDS 2020

Wednesday 23rd October 2019

Mr Anthony Carbines MP, Parliamentary Secretary for Health, Parliamentary Secretary for Carers and Volunteers, representing the Premier

The Honourable John Cain, Former Premier of Victoria and Australia Day Ambassador and **Mrs Nancye Cain**

Ms Karlie Brand, CEO, National Australia Day Council

Ms Susan Alberti AC, Chair, Australia Day Council Victoria

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 to Government House for the 2020 Victorian Australian of the Year Awards.

In 2015, when I first participated in these Awards, I had only been the Governor of Victoria for a few short months.

Since then, Tony and I have had the privilege of seeing so much more of Victoria, and meeting so many impressive Victorians. We have seen up close just how much of our State's strength depends on the cleverness and goodness of individuals.

And we have acquired an even greater understanding as to why it is simply essential to recognise those who make these special contributions on behalf of us all.

To say 'thank you', but most importantly, to hold them up for others to see. For others to be inspired. For others to emulate. For all of us to know that good people, kind people, people of vision and people of action, are all around us.

We love hosting this event here. We want to open this State House to as many Victorians as possible. For our guests to represent the diversity of our State. To celebrate the State's successes here.

January 2020 will mark the 60th anniversary of the *Australian of the Year Awards*, honouring and celebrating great Australians from all walks of life.

What an impressive roll-call we have seen in Victoria and Australia across those 60 years.

People who inspire us each and every day through their commitment, passion, innovation, drive, sacrifice, compassion and achievements.

Young and older people, women as well as men, First Peoples and recently arrived Australians, those from the city and from rural areas and people from a wide range of fields - science, human rights, medicine, the arts, civic leadership, music, community, charity and philanthropy and sport.

This evening, in each category, there are nominees who will leave here without the title. It is a great pity because the judges have had to grapple with choosing amongst such high calibre candidates.

I hope you are able to remember that you are amongst a tiny group of people recognised at this level for such a prestigious award. You can – and should – feel extremely proud.

So should the families, friends, and colleagues of all our nominees. May I say to them that, by their support, each one of them has also made an invaluable contribution.

We thank them for that.

That leaves me only to thank the hard-working volunteer members of the Victorian Australia Day Committee and the National Australia Day Council. And all the category sponsors.

Finally, the warmest congratulations to those who will carry the Victorian Australian of the Year titles this year. And all the best of luck to you at the national Awards in Canberra.

It is now my pleasure to introduce Mr Anthony Carbines MP, representing the Premier of Victoria, to address us.