



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
VICTORIA

YOUNG PEOPLE AND SOCIAL HARMONY BREAKFAST

Wednesday 16th October 2019

Good morning everyone!

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 morning.

Tony and I are delighted to welcome you to Government House.

It is early, I know. And, some of you may be wondering why you have been invited. To understand why, you need to understand the Governor's role.

In addition to being the guardian of Victoria's Constitution, the Governor presides over major ceremonial occasions, (such as ANZAC Day), helps to promote Victoria's economic, social and cultural interests overseas and uses a substantial part of her time in community engagement across our State.

That means highlighting, thanking and congratulating people, businesses, institutions and organisations that contribute to every aspect of life here.

A great privilege for us, as a part of our community engagement, is being able to identify issues that are dear to the State's future, and to invite people here who have the capacity to influence and improve that future.

You will not be surprised to hear that social harmony and unity are achievements upon which our State depends – and will always depend.

And that each one of you has been identified, in one way or another, as having the capacity to ensure that the harmony that we so value can flourish. And go from strength to strength.

Victoria's State motto contains just three words. '*Peace and prosperity.*'

I like that motto. I am proud of it. It is simple and direct in its language. Easy to understand. And, although at first glance it appears simple in its message as well, it is not. Both 'peace' and 'prosperity' can be widely interpreted. They do not just denote an absence of fighting, or financial success.

And within all the possible interpretations, upon which great minds could differ, no-one will disagree that unity and social harmony are absolutely essential to both the peace and the prosperity of our State.

We have the best resources for both.

We are a State of around 6.5 million people, from almost 250 countries of birth, from 135 different faith groups and speaking 230 different languages.

We are a community in which half of us were either born overseas or have a parent born overseas. I am one of them.

We are overall a diverse, accepting and open society. We know how enriched we are by our diversity. And we are known for it. In fact, diversity is one of the significant factors that underpins our renowned liveability.

At the same time, social harmony will always be a work in progress. Something which we cannot take for granted. Something that will always require commitment, conversations and understanding.

And that brings me to you.

Those under 30 now comprise around 40% of our State's population. You are a group with great influence. But not only by sheer force of numbers.

Your influence lies in some of the qualities that are the hallmark of your generation.

You are smart, innovative and global in your thinking.

We see it amongst the young Victorians we are lucky enough to encounter. Young people with clever businesses. Contributing to their communities. With a commitment to social justice. With a desire to contribute to their communities. To make our State fairer, stronger and kinder. We are grateful that Carmel Guerra OAM has agreed to moderate an exciting panel of speakers this morning.

Carmel is the CEO of the Centre for Multicultural Youth. For over 30 years, she has been a strong advocate for young people of refugee and migrant backgrounds in Victoria. Carmel is recognised for her knowledge on multicultural youth issues. She is the Chairperson of the Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network (MYAN), the national peak body representing multicultural youth issues in Australia and was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia in 2016 for her work with multicultural youth.

We thank Carmel too for her help in planning this morning's event.

We are fortunate to have with us today a panel of three outstanding young Victorians.

Carmel will introduce Lorrain Ngwenya, Dan Poole and Khayshie Tilk Ramesh to you shortly.

We are grateful to them for volunteering their time today.

It is now time for breakfast before we hear from the panel. I know we are in for an interesting morning, and I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible a little later.