



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
VICTORIA

## **CENTENARIANS' CLUB AFTERNOON TEA 2019**

**Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> November 2019**

**All our distinguished guests, most particularly our centenarians, and all the family members and carers who join them here today**

Tony and I are delighted to welcome you all to Government House for this special celebration.

I am also pleased for the opportunity to acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land upon which we are gathering, and to pay my respects to their Elders past and present.

How easy it is, in a room filled with so many of our community's elders, to understand the sophisticated social system of our first peoples, who have always relied upon the wisdom of elders.

I think that we are all getting better at the recognition of the elders right across our community.

Certainly, as our living standards and healthcare improve, more of us will live longer than at any other time in history.

Our centenarians are on the rise. This year, around 5000 Australians will, like you, turn 100. But it is predicted that, in the next 35 years or so, around 40,000 Australians will attain that age.

We will need a bigger Ballroom!

But, as for today. We have every reason to celebrate each one of you.

You have lived through many historical moments over the past 100 years.

You were born before car ownership was common, but you have lived to see the start of cars powered by electricity and hydrogen, and even driverless cars.

You were born before Qantas airlines had even started flying, but you have seen man land on the moon.

And although the first Australian public automated telephone exchange was introduced in Geelong just shortly before you were born, many of you might now own your own tiny smartphone. At the very least, you see your grandchildren and great grandchildren chatting on them, but also using them to watch television, read the news, send messages and take photographs.

How many changes you must have seen in your own families. Generations of them. Those who have gone before you. Those who have come since. It is hard to imagine the multitude of ways in which your influence has been felt.

We look forward to chatting with as many of you as we can today. To meet your family members and carers. To learn more about your rich lives.

I must tell you that I have studied our centenarians at these events across the last four years. I have searched for the secret to your longevity. I have certainly found common features amongst you.

I have noted resilience to meet whatever life throws up. Flexibility to meet the changes of the world. And optimism too.

Indeed, a few years ago now, one of our centenarians had just ordered himself a new car. And he was not the least bit phased that the delivery date was still some 6 months away!

This year, I have new learnings about the secret to a long life.

Amongst our guests today, we welcome 110 year old Hiek Neang. She describes the key to happiness being to *'forgive those who are in the wrong'*, and being *'peaceful within yourself'*. She also says to appreciate *'the little things'* and that we should *'eat while we have teeth'*!

I believe that we also have three comparative youngsters with us. Joyce Clarke, Edith Egan and Doris Quick are all 105 years old. I understand that Doris's tip for a long life is to *'keep out of mischief'* and to *'get along with everyone'*. I am guessing that an active lifestyle can also be important. Doris was apparently an avid swimmer until she was 98. Joyce participated in calisthenics into her nineties.

Congratulations to them and to every one of our special guests.

Thank you to Donna Bauer who first had the idea to start a 'Century Club'.

And, above all thank you to our centenarians for the many and varied contributions you have made to our community.

We hope you enjoy yourselves while you are with us this afternoon.