



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
VICTORIA

## **MELBOURNE CUP EVE RECEPTION 2019**

**Monday 4<sup>th</sup> November 2019**

**The Honourable Martin Pakula MP**, Minister for Racing, and other Ministers of the Victorian Government

**The Honourable Colin Brooks MP**, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly

**The Honourable Ted Baillieu**, Former Premier of Victoria

**The Right Honourable The Lord Mayor Ms Sally Capp**, Lord Mayor of Melbourne

**Mrs Amanda Elliott**, Chairman, Victorian Racing Club

**Members of the Consular Corps**

**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 welcome you all to this Melbourne Cup Eve Reception.

This is an evening that always brings into sharp focus for us the long history of the Melbourne Cup: a history that is inextricably entwined with the history of our Government House.

From the early 1880s, this House was the focus of a whirl of social events. Not just a Cup Eve reception, but a week-long round of parties, sometimes for as many as 3000 guests. Not just parties either. Houseguests. Many houseguests – often including the Governors from around Australia, who apparently found it a particularly agreeable time to visit!

Talking of history, I have noticed that the history of The Cup has been a topic on the tip of some tongues this year.

Of course, the Melbourne Cup has not always been run on the **first Tuesday** in November. That has only been the case for the last 145 years.

Of course, neither was Cup Day always important enough to be a full public holiday. That only started in the late 1870s.

And, naturally, it did not always attract enormous crowds. No, that took until around 1880, when 100,000 people – of our population of just 290,000 at that time – made the journey to Flemington to attend the Cup.

It is a long and proud history.

But the Melbourne Cup, in this – its 159<sup>th</sup> year – is not a relic of the past.

Nor is it an event of interest only to the people of Victoria.

Of the more than 300,000 who attend the Cup Carnival, over one third of them are visitors from interstate or overseas. And around 750 million televisions across the world will be tuned in to watch.

We can be proud that the Cup Carnival is a cornerstone event in Victoria's exceptional sporting calendar that, for example, sees Melbourne as the only city in the world to host both a Grand Slam tennis and an F1 Grand Prix event. And a city that can boast, again just by way of example, the President's Cup Golf this year and the 2020 ICC T20 World Cup cricket next year.

This evening gives us an opportunity to thank many of you who contribute to our important racing industry.

Amongst you are representatives of the industry's 92,000 strong workforce, and the many thousands who volunteer their time and effort to grow local racing clubs across the State.

Thank you to you all, with a particular thanks to VRC Chairman, Amanda Elliott and the Committee, and to VRC CEO Neil Wilson and the staff. We wish you only sunshine across this week.

And now to the stressful part of the evening.

Earlier, I mentioned the history of the Cup at Government House.

Well, a tradition I inherited was that at this event the Governor offers his/her tip as to the Cup winner.

Unfortunately, I tipped correctly in my first year in the role.

I say 'unfortunately' for two reasons.

First, because it has put pressure on me in subsequent years, and I have not been able to replicate the success.

And, secondly, because I didn't back it, and 'salt was [definitely] rubbed into the wound' when many of the 700 or so guests who had been here, got word to me to thank me for their great win on the 100 to 1 *Prince of Penzance*, ridden by Michelle Payne.

So here goes this evening.

If I tipped with my heart, it would have to be Latrobe [sic], wouldn't it? His namesake was the first Lieutenant-Governor of Victoria. And he did set aside the land on which this magnificent House was built.

But my head tells me to go with Finche. I like his form, his trainer, the jockey and his barrier position.

It now gives me great pleasure to introduce Minister Pakula to address us. And, no doubt, to give you a much better informed tip than mine!