



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
VICTORIA

## **WOMEN WINEMAKERS' RECEPTION**

**Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> November 2019**

**Members of the Consular Corps**

**Ladies and gentlemen**

**In particular, our distinguished winemakers**

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 all here this evening.

You may be wondering how this event, featuring women winemakers, came about.

The simple explanation is that we know the wine industry is an important contributor to Victoria's economy, and we know that many women are significant contributors to it.

We also know that we are still at a stage in the social development of the State and the nation – and for that matter, the world – where we need to highlight and celebrate the successes of women in every area of life that has been traditionally dominated by men.

That is important. We need to ensure that we raise our young girls and boys to understand that all paths are open to them. That there are no false barriers to their aspirations.

And, in many areas still, we need to encourage the participation of girls and women, to ensure that we can prosper by access to the full range of our talent pool, not just 50% of it.

In reality, women have always contributed to Victoria's wine industry.

In the earliest days of the colony, however, their contribution tended to be indirect.

It is said that when the young Swiss noblewoman, Sophie La Trobe, arrived with her husband, the colony's first Superintendent, Charles La Trobe, her departure from Switzerland prompted some Swiss vine dressers to head this way, bringing their expertise to our Yarra Valley.

Then, there were marriages and dowries that helped to buy or expand property holdings to establish vineyards such as Yering, St Hubert's and Yeringberg Estate.

Of course, in early decades, many wives, daughters and sisters contributed to our young wine-making industry. As they did in most farming enterprises. And, mostly, without recognition.

Today, they contribute directly, bringing their skill and talent to the art, science and craft of this important industry.

Victoria is a State that truly punches well above its weight in agriculture. We comprise only 3% of Australia's landmass, but account for some 27% of our food and fibre exports.

When it comes to wine production, despite our size, we are home to more regions (21), and more individual wineries than other parts of the country.

We export significant and growing quantities to China and the UK, amongst other markets.

The wine industry contributes some \$7.6 billion directly to our State economy: significantly more when the flow-on effect is considered. Similarly, it supports in the vicinity of 13,000 jobs directly and more like 33,000 jobs along the supply chain. It has a huge impact too on our international tourism figures.

And so it is a pleasure this evening to celebrate the wine industry and some of those who underpin its success.

We welcome women from 18 wineries. From different regions. Showcasing different varieties and styles. And winners of a variety of prestigious awards.

It is a great privilege for us to welcome each of our winemakers. We appreciate your time and your enthusiasm for this event.

We welcome too all those who have given their time in the generous act of coming here to sample this beautiful Victorian produce!

We thank Mr Alex Wilcox, Prince Wines, Ms Jeni Port, Wine Writer and Ms Angie Bradbury, Chair Wine Victoria for helping us to gather you here this evening.

I would also like to mention Gönül Serbest, the CEO of Global Victoria, the Victorian Government Agency that helps to connect Victorian exporters with international buyers and business leaders. Many of you will want to make yourselves known to her.

We hope that you will enjoy the wine-tasting in this beautiful historic setting of the Government House Ballroom. I am sure that drinking wine in this space is nothing new. But the gathering of such a large group of women winemakers was certainly something never envisaged when this Ballroom was completed in 1876.

How pleased we are to assist the times to change. And that you are here to share the occasion with us. Please enjoy discovering these beautiful Victorian products.