



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
VICTORIA

## **PREMIER'S VOLUNTEER CHAMPIONS AWARDS 2019**

**Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> December 2019**

**The Honourable Luke Donnellan MP**, Minister for Child Protection & Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers, **Representing the Premier**

**Mr Anthony Carbines MP**, Parliamentary Secretary for Carers and Volunteers

**Ms Penny Fowler**, Chairman, Herald and Weekly Times and **Mr Grant Fowler**

**All our Distinguished guests**

**Above all, Award recipients**

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 for the 2019 Premier's Volunteer Champions Awards.

This is a great celebration.

Everyone who attends these awards, everyone involved in them directly or indirectly, everyone who reads or sees publicity about them, will be uplifted.

And in a State that is flourishing in its growth, its diversity and its cleverness, we do profit from a reminder that underlying all those successful features is an army of good people who make this a great place to live.

I am convinced that *a great place to live* – as opposed to just a good place – is something that no government alone can achieve. No laws, rules or regulations can add the special element that we, as individuals, can contribute to our community.

You, our award recipients, are amongst those who make Victoria better and stronger – a great place to live.

Tony and I have always been aware of the importance of volunteers. But this role has given us a ‘birds-eye view’ of the depth and breadth of their contribution.

We know that more than 1.5 million Victorians volunteer. Men and women. Youth and seniors. In fact, those aged from 15 or even less, to those aged over one hundred.

We know that almost half of them volunteer for two or more organisations. And that more than half have contributed to our State for over 10 years.

But the figures and statistics only capture so much.

They certainly do not capture all the informal volunteering. People might not even recognise themselves as volunteers, even though they are supporting others – caring for an elderly person or neighbour, for example.

And the figures certainly can never capture the kindness, the altruism and the generosity of spirit that motivates our volunteers.

In a world that is sometimes daunting – whether due to uncertainty, inequities or rapid change, ‘kindness’ – as simple as it sounds – is something so precious to us.

There is something else that the figures can never really disclose. It is what your volunteering achieves.

It is not just what you **do**, but how you make others **feel**.

Of course, our community could not function well without the practical effects of your volunteering.

Whether in sport and recreation, education, welfare and community, faith settings, hospitals and health, heritage, children and youth, multiculturalism, emergency services, justice, environment, animal welfare, and in so many other areas too.

But in addition to all that you 'do', you make people feel that the world is a better and kinder place. That they are valued and not isolated. That someone thought that they were worth the effort.

Considering the exceptional community contribution by our awardees, how appropriate it is that the Premier's Volunteer of the Year will receive the Dame Elisabeth Murdoch Award.

Dame Elisabeth was the personification of care for others. She gave generous philanthropic support to many organisations, but she also gave of herself. Those whom she helped were left in no doubt of her care for and interest in them.

We congratulate each award recipient today. And your connections – your family, your friends and your colleagues. I have no doubt that you are very often supported by those around you, whether volunteering side by side with you, or attending to other work or family matters to enable you to volunteer your time.

In honouring you all this morning, we know that you will be a significant inspiration to others. Thank you.

It is now my pleasure to introduce Minister Donnellan, representing the Premier, to address us.