



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
VICTORIA

MULTIFAITH YOUTH PASSOVER DINNER

Tuesday 27th March, 2018

Rabbi Yaakov Glasman, Immediate Past President, Rabbinical Council of Australia and New Zealand, Senior Rabbi, St Kilda Synagogue

Rabbi Ralph Genende OAM, Senior Rabbi Caulfield Synagogue

Speakers

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.

Welcome to this Passover Dinner in our magnificent State Dining Room.

Throughout history, since 1876, when this House was finished, this room has been used for important State Dinners.

Sitting exactly where you are sitting, there have been members of Royal families, world leaders and leaders of our State and nation.

Last year, we held an Iftar dinner at this table, bringing together young people from different faith backgrounds to experience the traditions surrounding the breaking of the fast during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan.

It was an important dinner, and so we specifically chose to hold it at this table of historical significance.

This evening's dinner holds a similar historical importance to us.

It is our hope that by gathering you all together, you – our future leaders – might work towards the future **peace and prosperity** of our State.

We can be proud that there are more than 130 religions practised around our state. People from 130 different faith backgrounds living harmoniously together.

But making sure that we continue to refine and improve such harmony weighs heavily on the minds of my generation. People who – like me – are proud of how much we have achieved to ensure a happy multicultural and diverse community in Victoria, but who know that there is always more that we can do.

Respect and harmony are necessarily works in progress. They will always require ongoing commitment, conversations and understanding.

In bringing you together this evening, it is my hope that we can assist in that understanding. When we held the Iftar dinner last year, the rituals surrounding it were less familiar to me than those around this Passover dinner, given my Jewish background.

But I felt the same pride then as I do this evening, in bringing you together. And I had the same hope then as this evening: that you will enjoy learning from and about each other.

I hope that you will all have the chance to reflect upon and discuss the differences between you and those sitting beside you, in terms of beliefs, traditions, prayers and religious rituals.

It is good to know those differences: to learn and to appreciate the rich heritage of each religion.

I have no doubt that such openness will also help you to see the similarities between you. Your common sense of right and wrong. Your shared commitment to caring for your fellow man and woman. The family values that your religion instils in you.

And I suspect that you will appreciate the many similarities in your aspirations for the future and, as young Victorians, your hopes and dreams for the future of our State.

And so, this evening we will share a Passover (style) kosher meal. We shall have three young people of Jewish faith talk us to us about some of the traditions of Passover, including the Seder Plate you see at the top of the table, the blessing over the wine and the blessing of the matzah.

Just one thing in closing.

I am not sure if you noticed, but a little earlier I referred to you being the future leaders of our State, and therefore fundamental to our peace and prosperity.

When I referred to 'peace and prosperity', those words were not randomly chosen. They are in fact the words of Victoria's State motto.

'Peace and Prosperity'. It's what we wish for every Victorian. And it's what can be achieved through your openness and understanding.

We are so happy to share this opportunity with you and thank you for joining us.