



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
VICTORIA

GRAND PRIX WELCOME RECEPTION

Thursday 14 March 2019

The Honourable Martin Pakula MP, Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events

Minister Ben Carroll MP and **Ms Fiona Rothville**

The Honourable Shaun Leane MP, President of the Legislative Council and **Mrs Paula Leane**

Former Governors and spouses, Lady Murray, The Honourable Sir James Gobbo AC CVO QC and **Lady Gobbo**
and **Professor the Honourable David de Kretser AC**

The Honourable Mr Ted Baillieu, Former Premier of Victoria and **Mrs Robyn Baillieu**

Mr Jean Todt, President, FIA and **other distinguished representatives** of FIA, Formula One, the Australian Grand Prix Corporation and CAMS

Sir Jackie Stewart OBE, Three-time F1 World Champion

Lady Margaret Brabham AO OBE

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 are delighted to welcome you to Government House to celebrate the 2019 Formula 1 Rolex Australian Grand Prix.

If you grow up in Melbourne, or settle here long term, it can be easy to take for granted our jam-packed calendar of elite major events.

That is particularly brought home to me when we represent Victoria overseas, and notice how officials and business leaders in different countries marvel at the range and scale of the events

that we host, and the skill, technology, logistics, hospitality and entertainment that we bring to the task.

The Formula 1 Australian Grand Prix is an excellent example of all those components.

This event carries the history of more than 90 years since the first Grand Prix was staged in our State. And, now, it has the more recent history of almost a quarter of a century in which we have hosted the coveted first race of the FIA Formula 1 World Championship season.

Last year, nearly 300,000 people attended – I believe significantly higher than the average crowd attendance at races elsewhere. And of course huge broadcast audiences joined them, as the race was beamed to sports fans around the world.

But as exciting as it is, the Grand Prix event is more than just that exhilarating race.

As well as the Supercars competing for championship points, surrounding the race are many ancillary events, including the Innovation and Technology Hub.

The Hub showcases relevant Victorian industry sectors: education, car safety, defence, aerospace, drone technology and virtual and augmented reality.

Last year, some 30,000 students attended, as did leaders from government, eminent researchers from our universities and high-profile investors.

Most importantly, it demonstrates to young people the importance of and the breadth of opportunities in all the STEM fields.

This year, fans will also see an enhanced schedule of top music and entertainment, and will enjoy more premium hospitality.

Of course, we are proud to put our best foot forward. More than one in ten of the fans at the track are visiting from overseas. A third from interstate.

For those of you who have joined us from elsewhere, we offer a particularly warm welcome – not only to the 2019 Grand Prix, but also to the State of Victoria.

I know how much there is to keep you at the track across these special days but, when the race is over, or if ever you take a short break, make sure you enjoy Melbourne's magnificent parks and gardens, art galleries, coffee culture, restaurants and quirky laneways. And enjoy the wineries and beautiful countryside and coast of our State as well.

There are some acknowledgements that I'd like to make. But first, we all note with sadness this evening the untimely passing of FIA's Race Director, Charlie Whiting. A welcome guest to our shores across many decades, he will be greatly missed. Our thoughts are with his family and the wider FIA family at this time of loss.

As I said, there are some acknowledgements I am keen to make. First, I think the AGPC Chair, John Harnden AM and his fellow Directors for their vision and dedication.

And, of course, I thank Andrew Westacott, the CEO, who, together with his excellent staff, works so very hard. Although the event takes place over just several days, the behind-the-scenes work is fully focused across the whole 365 days of the year.

I congratulate the AGPC on winning some of 2018's prestigious sports awards, including the Best International Sporting Event and Best Live Experience at a Sporting Event.

We wish you all the best of luck in every aspect of the 2019 event and we do look forward to joining you at the track.

That leaves me only to say that I hope all our guests enjoy this evening, including the opportunity to see the wonderful cars and memorabilia that we have gathered for you.

And now, it gives me great pleasure to invite the Honourable Martin Pakula MP, to address us.