



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
VICTORIA

**RUMBALARA FOOTBALL NETBALL CLUB  
RECEPTION**

**Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> February 2020**

**Mr Paul Briggs OAM**, President of the Rumbalara Football Netball Club, **Mrs Kaye Briggs** and Rumbalara Board Members

**Mr Bradley Boon**, General Manager of the Rumbalara Football Netball Club

**Ms Trinity Crumpen-Winmar**, Rumbalara Netball Champion

**Ms Rebecca Falkingham PSM**, Secretary of the Department of Justice and Community Safety

**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 the Yorta Yorta and other Elders here with us this evening.

Tony and I welcome you all to Government House to celebrate the achievements of Rumbalara Football Netball Club.

It is a particular pleasure to reciprocate some of the warm hospitality that we have received at the Club. Mind you, I am not sure that even the terrific chef here can better Kaye Briggs's fantastic sponge cake that we have been lucky enough to enjoy several times.

This Club is dear to our hearts.

We were supporters and members well before we came into this role. I am now honoured to be the Patron and Number One Ticket-Holder. And we value our friendship with Paul and Kaye and very much admire their leadership in the community. We also admire their choice of AFL team (but that is just an aside).

This evening we can celebrate Rumba's success in footy and netball.

A total of 22 premierships. Several players who have gone on to careers in the AFL. And many who have been selected for representative football and netball at regional, state and national competitions.

Of course, Rumba can be proud well beyond those sporting achievements.

The Club sits within an important historical context.

The Cummera team in fact won its first Aussie Rules premiership in 1898!

In a nice piece of symmetry, Rumba's senior footy team won the Premiership exactly one hundred years later, in 1998, just one year after joining the Goulburn Valley Football League. (Mind you, the B-Grade Netball team had taken out the premiership in the Club's first year!)

The history of the land on which the Club sits, and the injustices faced by generations that had gone before, were fundamental to the vision of those who founded this Club.

They envisaged the Club as a place of belonging. A place to bring families together through strong, vibrant leadership. And to strengthen community through programs focused on health, education, employment, the arts and cultural identity.

I think one of the keys to your success has been the way you have collaborated to build those programs.

The Munarra Centre for Regional Excellence project is a great example. A partnership between the Club, the University of Melbourne and the Greater Shepparton Council, supported by the Victorian Government and the Kaiela Institute, it has been helping to create successful education and employment pathways for the local Aboriginal community.

Knowing what can be achieved through the arts as well as sport, I particularly admire the *First On the Ladder* art-meets-sport collaboration with Polyglot Theatre and others, celebrating the culture and achievements of your young people through a broad range of creative experiences.

These are just examples. The initiatives, projects and partnerships do not stop there.

Nor does Rumba's work in the wider community.

You must be congratulated for the initiative of the Unity Cup. We have attended several times, and admired how the Club, with the Congupna Football Club, has celebrated the many roles of women, and their impact in creating strong families and harmony across communities.

It is well documented that sport can foster physical and mental well-being, promote a sense of belonging, and unite people in a profound way. My experience as a judge and as an AFL Commissioner certainly brought that home to me. Tony's background experience as a lawyer and judge also enlivened him to it.

As the largest Indigenous club in Victoria you have had some 1800 players and their families involved since Rumba started. What a reach for your engagement.

Thank you to everyone involved in the club and connected with its activities. It is not only the elders, although their vision and energy is awesome. But when we have been at the Club, we have seen the impressive young people who are also leading. Thank you to each one of you, including Trinity, from whom we shall hear shortly.

Thank you too to all of Rumba's partners and supporters, many of whom are with us this evening.

Together, you are doing good work with so many indigenous youngsters. We all know that whatever enriches them, enriches not only Aboriginal communities, and not just the local Greater Shepparton communities, but the entire Victorian community.

We need every Victorian to enjoy - in the words of our State motto - '*Peace and Prosperity*'. Thank you for your significant contribution to that, and now please enjoy your time with us at Government House.