



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
VICTORIA

**GOVERNOR OF VICTORIA EXPORT AWARDS  
RECOGNITION EVENT  
Wednesday 25 November 2020**

**Minister Pakula,  
Secretary of DJPR, Simon Phemister,  
CEO of the Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Paul Guerra,  
Members of the Consular Corps,  
Our VGTI Commissioners,  
Exporters and all distinguished guests.**

I also acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land from which I am joining you, and pay my respects to their Elders past and present and to any Elders here with us at this virtual event.

I am delighted to be joining you for the Governor of Victoria Export Awards event in this, its 41<sup>st</sup> year.

Let me start by stating the obvious. This year is different. This year, we meet online (after such a great dinner at the NGV last year). This year, there has not been a traditional awards process as such. And, well, you don't need me to tell you all the ways in which this year is just different!

What strikes me though is that for every difference that we can point to, some things have not changed at all.

For me, the fundamental, as we ponder the challenges of 2020, is that as we entered this crisis, Victoria was blessed with a strong economy, thanks in no small part to our clever and innovative businesses and exporters.

And although the global pandemic has undermined economies around the world, including here in our State – and you know better than me just how difficult it has been to navigate such

uncertain times – one thing is for sure: we in Victoria have not become less clever or less innovative than we were.

The qualities that have served us so well as we have consistently grown across many years, will serve us well now as we recover.

For a small number of you, the pandemic has most likely brought commercial opportunities as your products or services have aligned with the needs of the times. But for very many, that has not been the case.

In fact, many of you have had to show significant resilience by *pivoting*. (I'm not sure about you, but I'm over that word. I just need to use it because it describes what you have in fact done). In any event, kudos to you for looking for new ways to do business, adapting and devising ways to keep up with these times, and the challenges that they have brought with them.

I commend each one of you being recognised this afternoon. I note amongst you previous GOVEA and national winners, and exciting new-comers too.

But I want to finish with two observations that relate to all our Victorian exporters.

The first is that history shows us that our prosperity in Victoria has been at its best when we have looked outwards. The panic of a global pandemic can tempt us to retreat inwards. Never has our international trade and investment – as well as the relationships that flow from them – been more important.

We need you, our exporters, if we are to grow back strongly from the challenges that the world is facing.

My final observation is this. I am in awe of your courage. Never have I been more mindful that, without you – the ones with ideas, the ones who take risks, the ones who represent us on the world stage – we would be all the poorer.

We thank you and we are proud of you.

Now, bring on 2021, and we look forward to celebrating the Governor of Victoria Export Awards later next year in the usual way.

In the meantime, I wish you all well, in every regard.