



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
VICTORIA

‘THANK YOU’ CONCERT
Saturday 20 March 2021

Mr Steve Dimopolous, Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier
Mr Shane Patton APM, Chief Commissioner of Victoria Police
Mr Andrew Crisp APM, Emergency Management Commissioner
Professor Brett Sutton, Chief Health Officer
Ms Claire Spencer AM, CEO, Arts Centre Melbourne
Distinguished guests

First, I acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land upon which we are gathering and I pay my respects to their Elders past and present and to any Elders here with us.

Tony and I are delighted for the opportunity to welcome you all to Government House, to thank you for everything you have done to support our State across the challenges of the past year or so.

You don’t need me to catalogue those challenges. You know up close the impact of the devastating bushfires and the global pandemic.

As Governor, the privilege for me is to be able to thank you, not just on Tony and my behalves, but on behalf of the wider Victorian community.

You have served us, and continue to serve us in so many ways. Some on the frontline, with your courageous work clearly visible. Some working in roles that take place more behind closed doors. Every single one of you helping to look after us and our State.

But let me make two important observations.

The first is that I am mindful that we are recognising you for work that, effectively, you always do. That is, although you have been called upon to perform at especially heroic levels in recent

times, that in no way diminishes the fact that you have used the skills and dedication that you have always brought to your various roles.

Day in and day out. Regardless of whether or not it is recognised in that evening's news bulletins.

Secondly, you are representative of very many thousands more people. Although we will continue to welcome as many as possible to Government House, we know that we will never succeed in hosting everyone that deserves to be thanked. There are simply too many.

It means that the symbolism of your presence, on their behalves, is significant.

That brings me to the mural behind me, commissioned by us here at Government House, to thank our frontline workers who have worked so tirelessly throughout both the bushfires and the health crisis.

The mural is the work of Mongolian Victorian street artist, *Heesco*, and we are proud that it will be donated to the regional town of Yarram, already the proud owners of other murals by *Heesco*. This one will be added to their collection shortly. Yarram will definitely be worth a visit!

Of course, the mural cannot depict every deserving group, and so the services shown there are no more than a representation of so many more.

That said, we are truly delighted that so many of the 'models' on whom *Heesco* based his work, have been able to join us today. It is a pleasure to have you here (and you are just as perfect looking as in the mural!!).

In arranging this morning's event, we were keen to design something that would give you a chance to relax in the beautiful setting of the Government House garden. We hope you'll agree that the House makes a nice backdrop.

We thought that a concert would provide the perfect antidote to all your hard work, and its toll on you and those around you, including of course your families and friends.

At the same time, we know how significantly artists and our creative industries have been hit by COVID – here, as elsewhere – and so it is a particular pleasure for us to be welcoming some outstanding performers.

We are grateful to have been supported by our wonderful Arts Centre Melbourne in arranging the entertainment we have for you today.

Thank you to Chief Executive Officer, Claire Spencer AM and her team.

Under Claire’s leadership, the Arts Centre ensured that online performances kept coming in lockdown, that we have been able to enjoy performances of music, opera and dance as a part of the Live at the Bowl series, (in partnership with the Victorian Government), and that live performances can resume in a COVID safe way. And today she will be our MC! And she’s good!!

It is now my pleasure to ask Mr Dimopolous, representing the Premier, to say a few words.